

A Handbook
for Journalism Educators

Teaching Journalism Online

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SHORT SUMMARY

Tackling the tech scenario for j-schools

How should instructors convey knowledge and teach skills in online course delivery formats, and in an informative and engaging way? This challenge was accelerated with COVID-19, and the trend can be expected to continue.

Journalism education, being heavily focusing on experiential learning and face-to-face interaction, is particularly challenged when it comes to remote teaching and learning. This manual aims to provide journalism instructors the resources to improve their teaching in digital spaces.

The subject matter includes:

- planning a new online course from scratch or transitioning an existing face-to-face course to online delivery,
- strategies to curb academic dishonesty in online courses,
- creating a student-centered learning environment,
- ways to support diversity in the virtual classroom,
- the future of online journalism education, drawing on what the pandemic period has taught.

This handbook is a valuable resource for any journalism teacher using technology to amplify their reach.

Even before the pandemic, more than **33%** of U.S. post-secondary students were already **taking at least one online course.**



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"Since wars begin in the minds of men and women it is in the minds of men and women that the defences of peace must be constructed"

A Handbook
for Journalism Educators

Teaching Journalism Online

Susan Keith and Raluca Cozma, editors

Foreword

COVID-19's long tail continues to impact journalism and journalism education, not to mention the effects on audiences for news and on students as journalists-in-training. To quote Olsen et al. (2022), "The physical closure of universities and university colleges due to Covid-19 has accelerated the digitalization of journalism teaching to a record speed. The pandemic, and the severe restrictions on-campus attendance, radically altered J schools' value proposition to their students, turning the teaching of practical journalistic skills primarily into a forced blended learning experience."

The pandemic precipitated deep changes in media production, including in the economics and technology for collecting and distributing news. Journalists, often facing cut-backs or even retrenchment, had to risk the virus as frontline responders in many cases, and many also found themselves having to work from home in makeshift offices, servicing audiences hungry for reliable news but who also needed to use connectivity for multiple other purposes.

The realm of journalism education, itself disrupted by the pandemic, has also had to adapt to these wider dramatic changes in industry and in society – or face irrelevance. Long a drawcard for students, educational programs in communications have now become more pertinent as people's lives have gone more online and become increasingly reliant on digital communications companies. Yet, journalism teachers, long aware of the already declining job market for entry-level journalists, are now faced by the pandemic's devastating impact on news enterprises. The few graduates able to find employment – sometimes in downgraded positions vacated by the exit of exhausted veterans – find themselves in very choppy waters. Other grads are condemned to unsteady, precarious and freelance work spanning a range of communications functions – or to seek out completely different careers.

Meantime, the rise of organized disinformation, fueled by Internet company business models, continues to generate massive fog. This not just overshadows the shrinking realm of verified information and informed comment; it aggressively seeks to corrode the trustworthiness of journalism. As UNESCO-sponsored research shows, there are mounting online attacks – perpetrated with impunity – against journalists, especially women journalists. These assaults drive many journalists into self-censorship or out of the profession. Despite public pressure, the Internet companies have yet to step up meaningfully against aggressors – let alone cease recommending disinformation and hate speech to users and de-platforming trolls en masse and depriving them of advertising revenue. Meantime, many news media companies also find themselves to be lagging – in regard to society's interests in diverse coverage and corresponding audience trust and in regard to innovating their own business models so as to get closer to viability.

All this poses huge challenges to journalism educators. For this reason, UNESCO is pleased to support the World Journalism Education Council, under leadership of Verica Rugar, which has overseen the initiative resulting in this handbook.

More than ever, perhaps, the conjuncture has raised questions about what to teach, and why. These dynamic developments inform a new UNESCO initiative to work with 100 African journalism schools to create a new definition of excellence in journalism education for the continent, responding to the contemporary changes. At the same time, besides the “what,” there is also the “how” that calls out for re-examining. In revisiting the ways that journalism can be taught, a wealth of experience has been gained during the pandemic. As recorded in this handbook, these cases show how a crisis may beget opportunities. It is evident that the tough lessons of past years can help us to build back journalism education – to be more effective than it was and with greater reach and impact.

Peer reviewers of this publication have urged that greater consideration be given to the student voice and to the Global South, in regard to teaching journalism online. UNESCO would be pleased to welcome further research in these regards – possibly for publication as a companion volume to this handbook. Also welcome is information about teaching journalism remotely in non-Western contexts – complementing that already published such as Nyarko and Yao Wodui Serwornoo (2022), Mustika and Qusnul Khotimah (2021), Pain et al. (2021), and Grabelnikov et al. (2020). Interested people are encouraged to be in touch via IPDC.Secretariat@unesco.org

Strengthening journalism education is one of the key results sought by UNESCO’s International Programme for the Development of Communication (IPDC). Each two years, the UNESCO Member States elect 39 of their number to govern the IPDC, which is a unique intergovernmental programme within the UN system that specializes in media development.

Supported by IPDC funds, this handbook is part of the UNESCO series on journalism education, covering a range of topical publications of value to journalism teachers all over the globe. Many of these outputs have met with such enthusiastic receptions that readers have offered voluntary translations. If any readers are interested to volunteer to help make this current resource available in other languages, you are warmly invited to get in touch. Meanwhile, we commend to you the contents of this handbook, and congratulate the editors and authors for the range of issues covered and the highly accessible presentation. Their efforts are invaluable to helping journalism education advance towards post-pandemic possibilities.

In the words of Dr. Emilly Comfort Maractho (2022), director of Africa Policy Centre at Uganda Christian University, “Now no one wants to go back to the old ways entirely. Some good aspects of the old ways will be retained, but most of the new discoveries in training as we figured things out will be our mainstay. In that sense, Covid-19 has changed journalism education for the better.”

Guy Berger, Former secretary of UNESCO’s International Programme for the Development of Communication (retired July 2022)

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How to read this Handbook

All chapters are visually indicated to make the reading experience more dynamic

Key concepts
are highlighted in blue

*Highlighted paragraphs
indicate interesting
arguments.*

Key
figures are visible

Practical Tips
and **exercises** are
indicated in bold

 **Takeaways**
always close each chapter

Chapters
referencing is located on
each page's margins



Introduction: What does it mean to teach online?

Susan Keith,

Rutgers University, United States

Raluca Cozma,

Kansas State University, United States

For some journalism professors, using technology to teach students located beyond a bricks-and-mortar classroom has been a familiar practice for years, because their programs have long delivered at least some courses online. For other instructors, who taught online for the first time when they had to move courses to remote delivery as the COVID-19 virus swept the globe, teaching outside the classroom was completely new, daunting, and stressful (Burke, 2020).

Journalism instructors faced the challenges of moving to online course delivery during a pandemic at a time when there had been “less research on pedagogical approaches for online courses within trade or professional disciplines, like journalism, which required high levels of authentic or experiential learning” (Delaney and Betts, 2020) than there had been in other more purely academic subjects. In addition, although there was an extensive literature in the field on teaching the practice of creating online journalism – reporting and presenting news in digital media (e.g., Adornato, 2021; Briggs, 2019; Bucknell, 2020; Foust, 2017; Song, 2018) – there were relatively few resources for the very different task of teaching journalism, especially journalism skills courses, in a fully online mode. More than three years into the pandemic, academics have begun to publish reflections on teaching in hybrid, remote, and online modes (e.g. Byrd, 2021; Filak, 2020; Filloux, 2020; Fowler-Watt et al., 2020; Sweeney, 2020; Wake et al., 2020), but we could not find a comprehensive, book-length guide, in English, to teaching journalism through online delivery. As such, this volume was designed to help journalism instructors navigate online, remote, and hybrid teaching with whatever resources they have at hand.

The handbook – containing chapters written by invited contributors from around the globe who have taught fully online courses – aims to give journalism instructors who are new to teaching online the resources they need either to create a new online course or module or to transform an existing course or module from face-to-face to online delivery.

The handbook’s chapters have also been conceptualized to appeal to more-experienced online instructors looking to improve their teaching in digital spaces or overcome common problems related to teaching journalism online.

⇒ Online learning as distance education

The online instruction that this book describes is a type of **distance education**, defined as “a method of teaching where the student and teacher are physically separated” (Kentor, 2015, p. 22). Sleator (2010) traces the earliest forms of this type of teaching, at least in the United States, to a 1728 advertisement placed in the *Boston Gazette* by a shorthand teacher who sought students from the countryside, whom he aimed to teach by letter. Mail correspondence courses became common in the 19th century, after the development of modern postal services, dating to the 1850s in England and continental Europe. In the United States, these courses were often targeted to vocational training, religious education, or preparation for university education, but the University of Chicago began offering courses for credit by mail beginning in 1892, and a number of other U.S. universities copied that initiative (Berg, 2005). In the 20th century, **first radio and then television** became delivery modes for university distance learning around the world (Barrera, 2009; Chunjie and Yuxia, 1994), with radio gaining particular popularity in regions with poor postal service and traditions of group listening (Kentor, 2015). The establishment of “open universities” – educational institutions such as the University of South Africa (1946), Britain’s Open University (1969), and India’s Indira Gandhi National Open University (1985), which attempted to counter academic elitism by admitting students with minimal or no qualifications – further promoted distance learning.

Education moved into **computer-based spaces** as early as 1959, when University of Illinois professors Dan Alpert and Don Bitzer created the first computer-based educational network, PLATO. Just seven years later, the University of Alberta’s medical school created rudimentary online courses, which Britain’s Open University launched in 1976 (Cook and Sonnenberg, 2014). It was not until the late 1990s, however – after the launch (in 1993) of the first graphical Web browser and the growing adoption of home computing by people with disposable income – that the number of **online courses** at universities began to grow markedly. By 2002, 1.6 million U.S. post-secondary students were enrolled in some type of online learning, a number that tripled by 2008, when more than 25 percent of all college and university students were taking at least one online course (Perry and Pilati, 2011). By late 2019, 37.2 percent of U.S. post-secondary students were taking at least one online course (Distance education, n.d.)

Some of those students – and others like them around the world – were, of course, enrolling in journalism courses, though it took time, in some regions, for momentum toward online education to build. Arant (1996)

4%

of ASJMC schools
had used ‘online
computer linkages’
to deliver distance
learning by 1996.

found in a survey conducted in 1996 that only 17 percent of 133 programs that were members of the U.S.-based Association of Schools of Journalism and Mass Communication offered distance education courses and only 4 percent of those largely residential post-secondary schools had used “online computer linkages” to deliver that distance learning. In other areas, however, online journalism courses were viewed, around the turn of the century, as efficient ways to reach dispersed students. Central Queensland University developed online journalism courses to reach students at its multiple Australian campuses, as well as students studying beyond the nation’s borders (Knight, 2003), while Ateneo de Manila University in the Philippines developed grant-supported online courses to train working journalists and journalism teachers (Valdez et al., 2004).

At the end of the first decade and into the second decade of the 21st century, there was a more noticeable move toward online courses and programs in journalism and related fields.

Castañeda (2011), for example, found in a 2009 survey that 62 percent of 81 responding schools accredited by the U.S.-based Accrediting Council for Education in Journalism and Mass Communication had courses that “deliver 80% or more of their content online” (p. 367) and 17 percent had or planned to launch fully online programs.

Sometimes transition to online learning or creation of new online courses was because online delivery suited instructors’ preferences or student desires to time-shift learning (Thornton and Keith, 2017). Other times a move online seemed likely to solve an issue, such as increased enrollment or the flow of students through a gateway course (Poniatowski, 2012), or reach potential students not likely to come to campus (Castañeda, 2011).

⇒ **How teaching journalism online differs from teaching other subjects**

These transitions were rarely easy, however, even when they were planned. Arizona State University professor Dawn Gilpin recalled, for example, that when she was first asked to move a social media course online, she was armed with the experience of having taken a variety of online courses – and excited about being able to teach in pajamas if she wanted to.

Then, she writes, “I sat down to plan. That’s when the panic set in. How could I possibly digitize my teaching style and turn my multilayered class into a series of ones and zeroes?” (Gilpin, 2017, p. 96).

One reason for the difficulty: **Unlike other disciplines, journalism education focuses heavily on experiential learning.** It is true that some journalism instruction comes in the form of conceptual courses that teach students “about” journalism as an institution (Lowrey, 2018) or a global community of practice (Witschge and Harbers, 2018) and can be translated fairly easily to a remote or online environment. Media law, journalism ethics, and media history courses would fit into this category. However, other journalism courses or modules – some of the most distinctive in the academic field – **focus on skills** (Bright, 2020; Deuze, 2006), though practical work is not universal in journalism education around the globe (Demchenko, 2018). These hands-on courses often give students the chance to practice work – in videography, video editing, news graphic production, newscast production, print design, and web design – that traditionally has required equipment or software that many students may not have at home. Other journalism instruction typically has students producing work in a **collaborative setting**, either as interns or student workers within media organizations or in a classroom that attempts to mimic features of the newsroom (Valencia-Forrester, 2020; Young and Gitlow, 2015). Finally, some journalism courses are clinical in nature, requiring students to **interact with the public while gathering news** (Jones, 2017; Littlefield, 2017). This volume attempts to address issues in all those areas.

In Chapter 1, Susan Keith (Rutgers University, United States) dissects the process of planning a new online course from scratch, weighing the advantages and challenges of synchronous, asynchronous, and blended online delivery. From backward design to course organization to technology access considerations, the chapter covers designing and teaching new journalism courses online.

In Chapter 2, Ingrid Bachmann (Pontificia Universidad Católica de Chile) walks us through the process of transitioning an existing face-to-face course to online delivery. Highlighting adaptability as the key to success, the chapter argues that being proactive about understanding student needs, focusing on learning outcomes, and being extremely organized are some ways to ensure a smooth transition.

In Chapter 3, Raluca Cozma (Kansas State University, United States) recommends some strategies to curb academic dishonesty in online courses, where it is harder to authenticate students' identities and deploy proctored exams. From reducing stress on students, which has been documented to correlate with a temptation to cheat, to leveraging affordances of online learning management systems, the chapter shows how classic assignments, like exams, as well as journalism-specific projects and portfolios, can be structured and scaffolded strategically to assess students' actual learning.

In Chapter 4, Manuel Alejandro Guerrero, Sandra Vera-Zambrano, and Constanza García Gentil (Universidad Iberoamericana, Mexico) examine several ways in which assessment of student learning could look different in online courses. The chapter proposes examples of assignments in online courses that leverage free resources from universities or nonprofit organizations to expand students' horizons and enhance their practical journalistic skills.

In Chapter 5, T. J. Thomson and Jason Sternberg (Queensland University of Technology, Australia) outline best practices related to the design and use of course management software and videoconferencing to support student learning. After providing guidance on identifying and mitigating logistical challenges inherent in using videoconferencing with students in far-flung time zones and with different connectivity issues, the chapter showcases how to use digital spaces and tools to augment higher-order learning and the perspectives instructors bring to their synchronous courses.

In Chapter 6, Zakaria Tanko Musah (Ghana Institute of Journalism) uses the case study of the Republic of Ghana to provide guidance on teaching journalism online in scarce-resource settings. The chapter shows how, with some creative thinking and flexible teaching methods, educational institutions in areas with deficient network infrastructure, computer access, and internet connectivity can adopt online learning during times of disruption to higher education, such as a pandemic.

In Chapter 7, Dave Bostwick (University of Arkansas, United States) recommends building active learning experiences into online courses to foster community and student engagement. A strategy that the chapter proposes as particularly effective in online courses is the R2D2 model, which stands for Read, Reflect, Display and Do. By matching highly interactive tasks in each of the four categories with authentic, individualized feedback, instructors can increase student engagement and learning.

In Chapter 8, Karen M. Turner (Temple University, United States) reminds us to consider how students taking online courses differ not only in digital literacy but also in learning abilities and interests. One strategy that the chapter proposes is to create a student-centered learning environment that accommodates individual learning differences such as using the Universal Design for Learning (UDL) framework.

In Chapter 9, George Daniels (University of Alabama, United States) covers ways to support diversity in the virtual classroom. From strategies to make students of a variety of identities comfortable in online courses to methods for discussing, delivering, and documenting diversity, the chapter reminds instructors how to be intentional in their efforts of promoting diversity and inclusion in online journalism courses.

In Chapter 10, Ruhan Zhao (Communication University of China) highlights the importance of teamwork and collaborative projects in journalism courses. The chapter argues that with judicious organization, thoughtful grouping strategies and division of labor, and careful instructor guidance and feedback, collaborative learning can be successfully implemented in online spaces.

In Chapter 11, Kelly Fincham (University of Galway, Ireland) explores ways to overcome challenges of teaching reporting- and writing-intensive courses online. From course design, to assignments, to feedback and grading,

the chapter provides advice to help instructors plan for, and succeed in, teaching synchronous and asynchronous online journalism courses with heavy writing expectations.

In Chapter 12, Kim Fox (American University in Cairo, Egypt) provides strategies for designing project-based audio production and podcasting courses for online delivery. Highlighting scaffolding techniques that give students feedback on each phase of their projects, from ideation to execution to promotion, the chapter emphasizes ways to take advantage of online resources to help students produce projects that set them apart from competitors.

In Chapter 13, Andrew M. Clark and Julian Rodriguez (University of Texas at Arlington, United States) offer suggestions for teaching television news in synchronous and asynchronous online courses. Although strategies such as backward design, assessment of student digital skills at the beginning of the semester, and constant feedback could benefit instructors in a variety of online courses, the chapter also zooms in on challenges unique to teaching TV production successfully online, in ways that parallel challenges that TV stations had to navigate during the pandemic.

In Chapter 14, Claudia Kozman (Northwestern University in Qatar, Qatar) outlines strategies for teaching research methods courses online. By focusing on the most taxing aspects of courses meant to enhance scientific research skills that journalists may need to know, namely teaching statistics and software usage, the chapter emphasizes the importance of advance organization, of leveraging online tools, and of blending online modalities.

In Chapter 15, Leslie-Jean Thornton (Arizona State University, United States) explores how time, place, and presence are important considerations when teaching very large courses online. A large number of students means increased issues and tasks for instructors to take care of, and the chapter proposes several solutions, from technical to organizational, to address these unique challenges.

Finally, in Chapter 16, Susan Keith (Rutgers University, United States) looks ahead to the future of online journalism education, drawing on what the pandemic period has taught instructors to suggest innovations that might be possible now that large numbers of journalism instructors have gained experience teaching online. The chapter suggests that journalism programs leverage online capabilities for cross-institution collaborations and greater involvement from journalism professionals while taking into account what recent graduates missed during the pandemic and the burdens shouldered by individual instructors.

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Part I:

Getting your course online



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Chapter 1:

Planning your online course

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The COVID-19 pandemic forced some journalism instructors to teach with online tools for the first time, in an emergency. Others, however, had been teaching *planned* online courses for years, part of a gradual increase in outside-the-classroom teaching that resulted in more than 37 percent of U.S. university students taking at least one distance education course in 2019 (National Center for Education Statistics, 2019). Significant growth of online education had also been recorded in countries as diverse as Australia, China, India, Malaysia, South Africa, South Korea and the United Kingdom (Kumar et al., 2017).

This growth should not be surprising, because online courses can have advantages for students, instructors and programs. They can eliminate the time and expense of traveling to the university, potentially attracting students and expert instructors from across town or around the world. Online courses can also allow journalism programs to schedule more courses or sections without straining classroom capacity. In addition, asynchronous online courses let students time-shift learning so that they can work, take internships or handle care-giving duties.

How do instructors meet the demand for online courses? This chapter offers ideas for those planning a *new* online course – Chapter 2 discusses transitioning *existing* courses from in-person to online delivery – focusing on clarity for students and instructors.

⇒ Synchronous, asynchronous or blended?

The first consideration for an instructor planning a new online course should be how the course will be delivered:

- Synchronously, with students and the instructor gathering, usually via a videoconferencing application, at the same time
- Asynchronously, with students choosing (within the limits of course deadlines) when to engage with content planned well before the term starts and made available online
- In a blended fashion, in which the class meets in person during some periods and online during others.

This determination is important because each form of online course brings its own challenges.

Instructors teaching synchronously, in the model closest to in-person instruction, may be able to adapt some elements of their classroom practice. Take, for example, the **think-pair-share exercise**, a common technique in which students reflect on course material, pair with a few classmates to discuss that content and then summarize the discussion for the class. The exercise can work in a synchronous online course, with pairs or small groups of students discussing material together in videoconference breakout rooms or by typing their thoughts in a shared cloud-based document before sharing with the full group (Slone and Mitchell, 2014). A key challenge, however, for instructors of synchronous courses is how to **monitor student engagement**. Requiring that students keep their device cameras on and show their faces may provide some data about engagement but can disadvantage students with unstable internet connections and those forced to participate from crowded, chaotic or public spaces. A better option may be to encourage students to keep cameras on – explaining how that helps the professor know when students aren't understanding the material – without penalizing those who need to turn cameras off (Castelli and Sarvary, 2021).

In asynchronous courses, it's harder to assess engagement. A learning management system (LMS) may record *which* students have accessed the digital space, *how often* and for *how long*, but it can't tell an instructor whether students have truly engaged with the material or merely have the LMS open on their screens. Instructors must wait until the first assignment is completed to assess students' understanding, which makes it important to grade early assignments quickly.

Another challenge of asynchronous online delivery is conveying the presence of an instructor who may have spent weeks preparing and uploading course materials but does not regularly interact with students in real time. Although some students appreciate the opportunity that this format gives for repeatedly viewing course materials, others may feel that they must 'teach themselves.' Instructors can mitigate this impression by **creating video lectures** in which they talk directly to students or narrate slides, rather than merely posting lecture notes. Instructors can also offer qualitative text or video feedback on assignments that goes beyond numbers in a rubric as well as optional **synchronous help sessions** that can be recorded for students who can't attend live (Jaggars et al., 2013).

Instructors can also build presence into asynchronous courses through **discussion boards**. These LMS tools attempt to emulate the discussions about course material that take place in physical classrooms or synchronous online courses. Typically, instructors post a question related to course material and ask each student to respond

by a deadline. Then, to make sure that students read and benefit from peers' posts, instructors often ask students to respond to two or three classmates, perhaps by a second, later deadline. Some instructors treat these posts as mini essays, grading them but rarely or never responding – an approach that can violate [student expectations](#). Larson et al. (2019) found that most students surveyed at one U.S. university thought that instructors should post between 5 and 14 times in each discussion, responding to students within 2 days and taking part between 4 and 7 days a week. Responding frequently in discussion boards also gives instructors a chance to correct misunderstandings of course content that may be shared by students in discussion posts.

[Blended courses – whether hybrid](#) (an arrangement in which all students meet one day in person and one day online) [or hyflex](#) (in which some students attend in person and others attend online, either by preference or on a rotating basis for social distancing) – pose different challenges. A hybrid course with synchronous delivery on the online day can combine the best of in-person and online instruction, but a hybrid course with asynchronous delivery on the online day can feel to students merely like a once-a-week course with lots of homework. A hyflex course, while offering flexible options for students in uncertain times, can pose technological challenges for instructors forced to record or live-stream an in-person class session (Naffi, 2020).

⇒ Thinking about students

While considering the online delivery model for a new course, instructors should also think about the students likely to enroll and their access to technology, preparation for online coursework and cultural contexts. To participate in an online course, students need, at minimum, access to the internet and a device – a computer, tablet or mobile phone – for viewing online course materials.

Ideally, students should also have consistent internet access, sometimes a challenge even in locations that are generally highly connected. In a survey of more than 2,900 students from 30 U.S. universities conducted during the first months of the pandemic, Katz et al. (2021) found that 7 percent had lost their internet service due to inability to pay for it during the previous 12 months and 28 percent had reached the cap on their mobile data plans. Instructors should encourage students to plan for backup internet and device access but prepare humane policies for situations when even backups fail.

28%

of students in a 2021 study had hit the cap on their mobile data plans

Instructors should also consider whether most students have previously taken online courses. If not, instructors will need to plan to reduce anxiety about online instruction – which one study conducted in 2016-2017 found was experienced by about half the more than 1,300 students surveyed at a midsize U.S. public university (Abdous, 2019) – by building into the first unit an orientation to the LMS and the version of online learning the course will use.

In addition, instructors need to consider technology needs specific to teaching journalism.

Some news-focused courses have traditionally required [specialized equipment \(microphones, cameras, or lighting kits\)](#) or [software \(for editing audio, video or still images\)](#), for example). Will students be able to use university equipment or access software through a university server? Or will they need to use whatever devices they have with whatever software they can access for free? If so, instructors should prepare to create or direct students to text- or video-based tutorials for using common equipment and applications.

Finally, instructors designing new online journalism courses should consider how students communicate in the relevant culture, subculture or university setting. Students accustomed to seeing a course instructor as an

authority who hands down wisdom – as observed in high power-distance cultures (Hofstede, 2011) – may need coaching to be comfortable in asynchronous online courses, where **students are expected to be co-creators of knowledge and learn independently**. Students from cultures where the instructor and university student are seen as more equal may expect an **online experience that is student-centered** and chafe at a synchronous course where the instructor only lectures over a videoconferencing platform (Jung, 2014).

⇒ Beginning at the end

With an understanding of the characteristics of the course modality and likely learners in mind, the instructor can turn to course content. A good way to begin planning a course and its syllabus, many educators agree, is by thinking first of the end of the term, a goal of what is known as ‘**backward design**’. What knowledge or skills should students have acquired by the time the course is over?

Wiggins and McTighe (2005), proponents of backward design, argue that teachers should follow three steps in planning a course and its units: identify learning goals, decide what assessment can provide acceptable evidence that students have met those goals and plan learning experiences that will prepare students to produce that evidence. Imagine that the final goal of an online digital-media reporting class is to have students be able to create text- and video-based reports. Helping students reach that goal might require units on interviewing, finding and using public records, triaging information from social media posts and doing basic video production work. Exercises that help students gain confidence interviewing strangers or practice organizing information would likely be better assessments than quizzes or exams.

The content of a new online course also is dictated by where the course falls in the curriculum. Will it be a required introductory skills course on which other courses build? If so, a slow to moderate pace, with time to reinforce fundamentals, may aid both students and instructors of later courses. Or will the course be an upper-level elective, taken by students who have mastered mid-level knowledge and skills? If so, the instructor may be able to cover more material faster.

⇒ Designing the digital space

After an instructor has used backward design to develop a syllabus, it’s time to translate that plan into an online form, such as a **learning management system**. In a synchronous course or a blended course with online synchronous elements, the LMS may function only as a virtual container that stores course materials, an online gradebook and completed student assignments. In an asynchronous course, however, the LMS or other online space *becomes* the course, serving as the primary, if not only, point of contact for the **three dimensions of student learning interactions** identified by Moore (1989): with the instructor, with course content and with other students.

As a result, the space must be carefully organized, which takes more time than some instructors initially realize. They should think about:

- **What students see first:** The home or landing page should identify the course and instructor and invite student participation. Some instructors leave the home page unchanged throughout the term. One way to

signal instructor presence, however, is to change the home page with each unit, so that students opening the site see current topics, materials and assignments first.

- **How course units are organized:** Different LMS platforms offer different ways of organizing course units, and some offer more than one tool for organizing and naming units. Talking to colleagues can help instructors determine the best approach or the approach students are likely to be familiar with.
- **Where readings are located:** Students sometimes become confused because instructors use different locations for storing readings: placing links on the syllabus or home page for each unit or storing PDFs of the readings in a 'resources' section of an LMS. By communicating clearly where materials can be found and being consistent, instructors can reduce student frustration.

⇒ **Finally, the welcome**

The last step in planning an online course is preparing a welcome and first-unit activities that **set the tone for the term**. Instructors should greet students by email or other channels a day or two before the term begins, reminding students about when and how to gather for a synchronous online course and where course materials are located for an asynchronous online course. This communication should convey not only the instructor's excitement about the course content but also the instructor's willingness to engage in the online format.

Instructors should also think about how the first day or first unit can convey what the term will be like. One way, in a synchronous course, is to incorporate a mini version of the term into the first meeting. If a synchronous course will frequently involve the instructor introducing an issue and then breaking students into small groups to discuss it, then using that approach on the first day will show students what to expect. In an asynchronous course, an instructor can build community and instructor presence with two **early discussion board assignments**: one asking students to introduce themselves and another assigning each student to ask a question about the course or a journalistic practice.

⇒ **Conclusion**

In online teaching, even more so than in face-to-face teaching, **clarity is key**. So before beginning to prepare a new online course, instructors must understand the advantages and challenges of the mode of digital delivery the course will use: synchronous, asynchronous or blended. Next, instructors must consider the access to technology, previous online learning experiences and cultural expectations that students are likely to bring to the course. With those factors firmly in mind, instructors can begin to plan course content, employing backward design to ensure that materials and exercises are consistent with the course objectives. An important part of that work, especially for asynchronous courses, is designing the digital interface for the course, keeping the goal of clarity in mind.

Takeaways

- ▶ **Different online delivery modes have different advantages and challenges, which instructors need to understand.**
- ▶ **Consider students' access to technology, online learning experiences, cultural understandings and expectations for instructor presence.**
- ▶ **Designing the digital course space and uploading course materials takes time, especially in asynchronous courses.**

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Chapter 2:

Transitioning face-to-face courses to online format

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There are many reasons for instructors to switch from in-person to online courses. The transition may be planned (because, for instance, of student demand for an online version of a course or a remote audience for the course) or unplanned (*e.g.*, as the result of an emergency preventing face-to-face, on-campus learning, sometimes when the course has already started). Regardless of the specific scenario, however, one thing is clear: Instructors moving courses from face-to-face to online delivery cannot simply do the same things they would have in a traditional classroom. For online courses to work, journalism instructors need to rethink the way they teach and organize courses and reassess their methods of evaluation, oftentimes with no previous training on the matter (Delaney and Betts, 2020). Indeed, the key in this transition is adaptation, rather than mere replication. Accepting change and embracing new opportunities may make the whole experience less daunting for instructors and students (see Bazluki and Milman, 2019).

While there is no one-size-fits-all way to teach – online or otherwise – the challenge of transitioning to remote classes goes better with a five-fold approach in which instructors get some clues from their own students, focus on learning outcomes rather than specific activities, adjust their

procedures, organize and manage their lessons, and clearly communicate with students about the course. Each of these steps is further developed below.

⇒ Getting information

Transitions to a remote or online context can be overwhelming for journalism instructors and students, especially if the switch is in response to an emergency. One way to make things easier is to **collect information about the students' expectations and experiences regarding e-learning**. Before classes start, instructors can assess students' familiarity with the learning management system or other digital platform the course uses, students' levels of digital self-efficacy, and students' concerns about the online format. What instructors learn can then serve as input for designing or adjusting a course originally taught in person (see Bazluki and Milman, 2019; Sturgis and Lamb, 2021).

Gathering information from students is even more important if the **transition is unplanned** and occurs in **reaction to an emergency** in which students may face barriers affecting their study conditions. They may report having unreliable internet access, slow computers, or no access to tools that would usually be provided by universities, such as software or cameras. Students might prefer synchronous classes so they can keep to a regular schedule, but the emergency itself might disrupt those plans, leading instructors to opt for asynchronous sessions or to record their live sessions and make the recordings available for students who cannot attend synchronous classes. Knowing students' preferences and situations beforehand can help instructors make more informed decisions regarding their class schedule and organization, including whether a synchronous or an asynchronous class would be a better fit.

There are pros and cons to each course format. **Synchronous courses facilitate real-time interactions** between students and instructors, allowing students to ask questions during the class period, participate in live discussions, and take part in class presentations or other group activities that require a facilitator. Thus, the synchronous format goes well with courses that benefit from such interactions, as some seminars and certain skills courses do. **Asynchronous classes**, on the other hand, offer students more flexibility – including time to reflect more thoroughly on the content they are learning or practice certain skills at their own pace. The format works well for courses where such **cognitive engagement** is important, such as some lectures and practical courses (Delaney and Betts, 2020; Poniatowski, 2012; Sun and Chen, 2016).

It is also a good idea, too, to seek cues from students later on. For instance, feedback can be collected halfway through a term, to get a sense of how the course is going and how the instructor is doing (offering a chance to correct course if needed). Students can also be asked at the end of the semester to offer comments that go beyond regular student course evaluations (Poniatowski, 2012; Scagnoli, Choo and Tian, 2019). Students often provide great feedback on what has worked well and what can be improved, lessons for future online courses.

⇒ Focusing on learning outcomes

One positive in a switch from face-to-face to online classes, even when the transition is unplanned, is that the basic elements of course design – objectives, course mechanics and course materials – are already developed. That does not mean, however, that an instructor can easily translate the components of a face-to-face course

to an online setting. That is particularly true in a professional discipline such as journalism, where **experiential learning and practical skills are fundamental** (Cervi, Simelio and Tejedor Calvo, 2021; Delaney and Betts, 2020; Sturgis and Lamb, 2021).

Teaching journalism – whether in conceptual or practical courses – is not about doing a certain number or type of evaluations, readings or assignments, but about mastering the specific skills, tools and concepts students are expected to learn. As a result, the main objective in a transition from the traditional classroom to an online setting must be on what the students should understand or be able to do at the end of the course, rather than on just covering a specific course outline (see Cervi et al., 2021; Poniatowski, 2012; Sun and Chen, 2016). What is it that students need to remember, understand, apply, evaluate, analyze or create?

What practical skills are they expected to acquire? And how does an online context affect that?

At least in theory, learning outcomes can be attained via synchronous and asynchronous delivery, but the characteristics of each format may affect course logistics. For instance, synchronous classes allow for in-class activities that require a facilitator, whereas with asynchronous courses students may work according to their own schedules or rely on tools such as wikis and social media to do collaborative work.

With those considerations in mind, instructors may need to revisit their assignments and their course mechanics. For example, if the goal is to have students develop critical thinking skills, there are several ways to accomplish that beyond class discussions, which are complicated in synchronous remote lessons and less viable in asynchronous classes. **Online discussion boards** can be a good equivalent and give students a space to voice their opinions and engage with their classmates (Aloni and Harrington, 2018).

In online classes, training students in practical skills can get particularly tricky, especially if the switch to online classes was unexpected. Instructors might want to consider whether their goal is to teach students to be proficient users of specific tools or software or enable students just to understand them. For instance, do students need to know the logistics of video editing or learn a specific editing program? Instructors should be mindful that some students might not have the resources or technology off campus to use some programs available on campus; they should consider **open-source software** options (e.g., Faundes and Osorio, 2020; Sturgis and Lamb, 2021).



Adjusting creatively

When transitioning away from the classroom to online delivery, lectures, class activities and assignments likely will need to be reworked. If the switch was rather unplanned, this might be the hardest part of the transition. While it might be tempting to just mimic or continue with what was done in person, that usually is not feasible.

For instance, in face-to-face courses it is common to require **class participation to assess student involvement**, but participation is harder to evaluate by traditional means in both synchronous and asynchronous courses. Journalism instructors should consider that participation in an online course may occur in multiple ways other than speaking up during a lesson. Students might submit course-related materials (for example, posting examples in discussion boards) or participate actively in written form in **videoconference chatrooms** (Aloni and Harrington, 2018; Sun and Chen, 2016).

In asynchronous sessions, instructors can encourage engagement by **posing questions in recorded videos**. Those questions can serve as guiding threads of the session, telling students what they are going to learn in that module. At the end of the session, students should be clear about the answers. Questions can also serve as breakpoints in a recording, so that the students process what they have newly learned (e.g., Brame, 2016; Vural, 2013). Along these lines, while visuals are important in online classes, instructors should keep in mind the **cognitive load of a video**, usually much higher than interactions in face-to-face instruction. Too much information packaged into a short period of time, rather than being efficient, is **overtaxing** (e.g., Brame, 2016; Scagnoli, Choo and Tian, 2019).

Students often report having a **harder time keeping focused** on lessons when they are online. However, there is also evidence that **simple games, as well as polls, music, and humor**, help keep students engaged in synchronous sessions. Splitting content into shorter units (e.g., three to five videos) for asynchronous lessons also helps. Along these lines, journalism instructors moving courses online could also consider shorter but more frequent assignments throughout the semester, with periodic and progressive assessments of students' progress. Revision to assessments is particularly important when the switch to remote course delivery is unplanned in a course that was already underway.

⇒ Organization, organization, organization and communication

For online journalism instruction to work, course content should be clearly organized, so that students can keep track of their own progress, especially in asynchronous courses (Sun and Chen, 2016). Orderliness is very important as well. Instructors should provide timelines for activities and offer a consistent structure for course content (e.g., weekly schedule or thematic progression), including when content is posted and how long course materials are available (Delaney and Betts, 2020). Such organization does not need to be detailed, but it does need to be clear, so students know what to expect and where to find what they need. A good way to do this is by structuring online courses into **topical modules**, which makes the thematic progression of the course clear for everybody. Online instruction also requires **establishing clear communication channels**: Students need to know where to find information, how to reach the instructor, and the likely response times for their inquiries, especially in asynchronous sessions, where students do not necessarily get to interact in real time with their teachers. Online instructors also need to be prepared to immediately address issues that arise during the course. If the instructor gets the same question more than once, it is a good idea to email the entire class to clarify things.

Instructions and requirements for assessments should be available to students in a timely fashion. Students need to know how exactly they submit their work and when they will get their grades. Also, **instructor feedback must be personalized**, with each student knowing the details of their individual performance, rather than just a global assessment of the entire class (see Bazluki and Milman, 2019; Brame, 2016).

⇒ Conclusion

Transitioning to online classes is challenging. It requires instructors to rework their lectures, assignments, and in-class activities originally planned for face-to-face instruction and adapt them for remote delivery. All the steps mentioned here take time, but they help smooth the way in the transition from in-person to online course

formats. The characteristics of journalism training do not always translate easily to e-learning, but **creativity and attention to detail lead to effective and engaging online instruction.**



Takeaways

- ▶ **The key when transitioning from in-person classes to remote/online courses is adaptation. Embracing change is an important factor in the success of this switch.**
- ▶ **Teaching journalism mixes instruction related to conceptual knowledge and practical skills. When transitioning away from in-person classes, the challenge is to define specifically which concepts and skills students must learn and how to assess that learning online.**
- ▶ **Organization of course content and clear communication channels help both journalism instructors and students to perform well and have successful experiences online.**

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Chapter 3:

Overcoming assessment pitfalls in online teaching

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Online course delivery requires special attention to creating assignments and assessments that work well in virtual spaces, where [physical proctoring and authentication of students' identity](#) may be difficult or impossible to achieve. As in traditional in-person classes, assignments in online courses signal to students what the instructor values in student learning, so assessment methods should reflect what the educator aims for students to take away from the course. Communicating the educational goals of a course and its assignments should not be left, however, to the assessment day. Clarifying **course goals and learning objectives early** on helps students see the purpose of assignments and understand how these assessments relate to their personal and professional growth, which motivates them to perform better and discourages them from resorting to academic misconduct (Phelan, 2020). This is especially important in online classes, where research has shown that students find it easier to cheat (King, Guyette and Piotrowski, 2006) and are also more tempted to cheat than in traditional in-person classes (Harmon and Lambrinos, 2008). Although student performance is equivalent in in-class and online exams when examinations are proctored (by proctoring software in the online format), grades do tend to be

slightly higher and have larger fluctuations in unproctored online tests (Ardid, Gómez-Tejedor, Meseguer-Dueñas, Riera and Vidaurre, 2015).

⇒ **Online technologies can help students cheat, but they can also help instructors minimize academic dishonesty**

User-friendly technological innovations have made it easier for students to access course, exercise, and exam materials. Those same innovations, however, also make it easy for students to take course materials created by their professors, including exam questions and homework solutions, and upload them to **essay banks or file-sharing websites, such as Chegg, Course Hero or OneClass**, where the materials can be accessed by other students, generally for a fee. In the name of offering **‘homework help’ or ‘tutoring services,’** these sites offer materials whose use can be seen as cheating. During the COVID-19 pandemic, when virtual course delivery and unsupervised online exams became the norm, research in the STEM disciplines (Lancaster and Cotarlan, 2021) found that students were almost 200 percent more likely to use such services to request exam-style questions, in ways considered to **violate academic integrity**. Employing or paying a third party in this way to complete work for which a student receives academic credit constitutes what is often called ‘contract cheating’ (Clarke and Lancaster, 2006).

With the proliferation of online platforms, students can also get help free of charge, in the form of online video tutorials that show students how to inspect the elements of online exam webpages to identify the correct answers on a multiple-choice test or even increase the limit on a timed exam. These tricks won’t work on **protected course management systems such as Canvas, or in the Respondus LockDown Browser**, but instructors who don’t have institutional access to such platforms should keep these challenges in mind. Of course, it would take students hours to painstakingly check the source code of a website for each answer option to a conventional multiple-choice exam, which amounts to more effort than it would take to simply study for the exam. With these challenges in mind, every semester, I remind students that I treat them as adults and ethical professionals and that I don’t believe in policing them. Since they pay tuition for each class, it’s ultimately their business how they choose to spend their money, but it doesn’t make economic sense to let the opportunity of having their actual learning assessed go to waste. If students cheat, they cheat themselves. Research by King, Guyette and Piotrowski (2006) indicated that the mere act of telling students that independent work is expected and that outside consulting is not allowed prevents some students from resorting to cheating.

However, recent studies have shown that students taking unproctored online exams get on average higher grades than those in monitored exams (Dendir and Maxwell, 2020), so students might be accessing file-sharing sites or looking up answers on their phones or another device, despite the instructors’ warnings.

Students who take unmonitored online exams later during the allotted time have been shown to earn higher grades and complete the exam faster than their peers who started earlier, indicating that they collaborate using tools outside the institutional virtual learning environment (Balderas and Caballero-Hernandez, 2020). To ward off such collaborations, instructors can set time limits on exams and create their own large pools of exam questions from which a few questions can be assigned randomly to each student. This way, students are taking similar but unique versions of the same exam. In addition, setting the course learning management system to show questions one at a time also makes it harder for students to ‘compare notes.’ If question pools are revised every few years, the potential for cheating is significantly reduced.

Testing centers, lockdown browsers or proctoring systems can also be implemented to curb cheating on online exams, but these options are not feasible or available at all institutions. Experts recommend focusing on connecting with students to facilitate learning and subject mastery rather than agonizing over potential cheating, which creates a **toxic pedagogy of suspicion** (Lederman, 2020). Below are some strategies to overcome assessment pitfalls unique to teaching journalism courses online that do not require use of monitoring tools.

⇒ Create incremental, varied assignments

For unmotivated students, learning is not necessarily the goal of taking a course. Many will sometimes care only about the grades or just passing a course. Despite instructors' best efforts to create engaging lectures and require riveting readings, many students will 'study to the test.' As a result, examinations shouldn't be created as a means for assigning a grade as much as a conduit for learning.

After teaching both skills and conceptual journalism courses online, I have learned that every lecture in both synchronous and non-synchronous online courses should be accompanied by class activities that incrementally apply central concepts covered. **Scaffolded assignments** ensure that students are following along rather than save paying attention to class materials until large exams, at which point a sense of overwhelm and pressure might make them more tempted to resort to shortcuts or academic dishonesty. In classes where I do have standard midterm and final multiple-choice exams, I end each lecture with five **quiz-style practice** questions to review main takeaways. This signals to students not only the key facts and lessons from the material I covered, but also diminishes unfamiliarity and uncertainty, which have been shown to be conducive to academic dishonesty, especially during the pandemic, when many students were forced, rather than chose, to move to a new virtual learning environment. If you deem exams to be the best assessment for the learning happening in your course, consider giving more frequent smaller quizzes rather than large exams, which lowers the stress, stakes, and ultimately the temptation to cheat (Lederman, 2020).

⇒ Go beyond conventional, high-stakes tests

Journalism courses make it easier for educators to create diverse assessments that are not necessarily conventional, multiple-choice-type exams that emphasize fact memorization and weigh heavily in determining a student's final grade in the course. In writing courses I give only one exam, on **AP style**, which is worth five percent of the total grade. The rest of the assignments are **exercises, group activities, and portfolio pieces** that provide more accurate assessment of the courses' learning objectives.

Such assessments are not just a means for assigning a grade but also a way for educators to learn about their students. After I taught my first non-synchronous online course in a condensed six-week summer semester with close to 50 students, I was surprised to receive an e-mail from a student asking me to write her a letter of recommendation. She mentioned she had learned a lot in my class, and the subject matter was relevant to the internship she was applying for. The request gave me pause when I realized I couldn't place the student.

The request gave me pause when I realized I couldn't place the student.

Since then, I've incorporated assignments into my online classes that allow me to get to know students in meaningful ways so that I can write informed letters of recommendation and help

Chapter 3: Overcoming assessment pitfalls in online teaching

high-achieving and deserving students earn relevant academic and professional opportunities. **Discussion boards**, where bigger classes are divided into small groups and where I rotate students through leader and summarizer roles; **online portfolios** that highlight original work produced in class during the semester; **sporadic synchronous meetings** with students even in non-synchronous classes; and **about-me writing assignments** that allow me to gauge skills at the beginning of the semester but also to learn about my students' goals and backgrounds have helped me get a better sense of how prepared and motivated my students are and what strategies I should employ to engage and connect with them more effectively. In classes where I give writing exercises to apply concepts covered in class, I use peer review, having students edit each other's assignment before turning it in. **Peer assessment increases engagement, builds community, helps develop critical thinking and editing skills**, and has been shown to decrease student frustration with their grades (McKeachie and Svinicki, 2006, p. 83).

⇒ **Consider ungraded assignments**

Every semester, I ask students in small asynchronous online courses to record **video introductions** to share with the rest of the class and then **write welcoming messages under the videos of at least three classmates**. This assignment is not graded but helps create a sense of community and allows me to put a face to each name. In synchronous writing and production classes, the first assignment is a brief autobiography that enables me to gauge writing competencies as well as career objectives. It is accompanied by a six-word memoir to be tweeted with the class hashtag, which sparks insightful class discussion but also helps students practice concise writing. This **bio blurb** becomes the 'About Me' section on the students' online portfolios, which I use as a capstone assignment in most skills courses. In larger classes, these types of assignments could be assigned a nominal number of points to encourage contributions or be counted under a course participation grade.

⇒ **Consider open-book exams**

Many journalism courses emphasize understanding of processes and ability to search for relevant information rather than fact memorization. **Open-book exams** not only allow students to showcase these higher levels of learning, but they reduce students' propensity to cheat (Phelan, 2020). Provided expectations are clearly communicated, open-book exams also reduce stress, which has been shown to correlate with temptation to engage in academic dishonesty (Lederman, 2020).

⇒ **Consider portfolio assignments**

Most journalism courses emphasize experiential learning. If students produce original news stories in any of my classes, I ask them to revise the articles and upload them to their online portfolios at the end of each semester. Having **work published online increases students' pride** in their newsgathering and writing efforts and accountability.

⇒ Consider essay assignments

For conceptual courses that employ essay assignments, instructors can use programs such as **SafeAssign**, **Turnitin.com** and **Plagtracker.com** to detect instances of plagiarism. However, communicating expectations about citation and collaboration is once again crucial for discouraging academic dishonesty.

I tell my students that if plagiarism or fabrication even crosses their mind in a journalism course, they should probably choose a different major.

An open, positive discussion about ethics and honesty can go a long way toward improving academic integrity (Lederman, 2020).

⇒ Be fair but compassionate

If, despite your best efforts to curb academic dishonesty, students attempt to circumvent an assignment, be firm and fair when responding to violations of integrity. Follow the policy laid out in the syllabus but be compassionate. As the pandemic made evident, students respond to stress, uncertainty, and pressure in varied ways. Academic misconduct isn't always dishonesty (Lederman, 2020). It can be the result of **poor self-regulated learning skills**, meaning academic strategies used in controlling and regulating learning in an online environment (Mao and Peck, 2013), genuine misunderstanding (especially if the online course delivery did not allow for repetition of instructions and expectations), or simply a lapse in judgment. The way you respond to students' bad decisions can help them learn from their mistakes.

Takeaways

- ▶ **Clearly communicate your expectations for integrity and the educational goals of all assignments.**
- ▶ **Create lots of low-stakes assignments and quizzes rather than a few large exams with heavy impact on the total grade to more accurately track progress over the course of the semester and to reduce stress, which in turn lowers the temptation to cheat.**
- ▶ **Leverage the affordances of online technologies when developing your exams, such as creating a large pool of questions to randomly create unique versions of the test for each student, showing only one exam question at a time, and keeping exams open for a set period, to discourage collaboration outside the online learning platform.**

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Chapter 4:

Creating assignments and assessments that work well in online spaces

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Most journalism students love to encounter the world, understand it, and tell stories about it. To that end, they are usually willing to go into their communities in search of newsworthy events. However, [learning about journalism without leaving their bedrooms during the COVID-19 pandemic became a challenge.](#)

Perhaps the most important lesson we have learned as instructors is that we must be flexible and open to adapting and adopting different forms to engage journalism students in their own formative process. In this regard, what becomes crucial is the educational approach behind both face-to-face and digital courses. Regardless of format, journalism instruction stresses collective, critical thinking skills that help students evaluate the context and circumstances of production, distribution and consumption of information. With a focus on experiential learning, we discard the use of traditional memory-based examinations, which require attention to issues of academic dishonesty, proctoring or technology-enabled monitoring (Hu, 2020). The assessments and

resources we suggest in this chapter can be used to promote reflection and debate among students through awareness, appreciation and responsible use of knowledge and skills in journalism.

At the very beginning of the lockdown, our university introduced us to tools that facilitate interactions with students, such as **Kahoot!** – a platform for creating, sharing, and playing learning games – under the premise that they would appeal to most students. The problem we faced some months later is that most of those tools emphasize learning skills assessed via quizzes that require memorization and velocity rather than a reflexive assessment that untangles complex subjects. Students found the tools very playful, but eventually questioned their utility, associating them to **infotainment or “soft journalism.”** Would looking for fast answers be a way to pre-dispose students to understand the social, political, health or environmental issues that journalism often seeks to explain?

We do not aim to undermine the use of such tools; our purpose is to suggest other resources that we have found more interesting and useful for journalism students. As we stand for critical reflection rather than memory-based skills, assessments that require debates, essays or production of in-depth journalistic products seem more appropriate than exams to evaluate student learning outcomes. Thus, we focus in this chapter on three proposals:

- Using webinars to generate debate and deep understanding of complex issues
- Using free online material and platforms to help students understand how to develop skills and produce quality journalism
- Guiding students to an understanding of journalistic uses of social media to engage them in demanding better-quality information and content



Webinars

Webinars, such as those for local journalists available from the Council of Foreign Relations (2022), tackle complex issues such as reporting on COVID-19, elections, immigration and radicalization and even news production. Journalists and experts discuss these topics and best practices in journalism to help professionals and journalism students connect the local issues they cover to global dynamics.

The proposed assignment leveraging this tool is to have **students in a synchronous online course watch a webinar, participate in debates about the content and then collectively think about how the issues covered in the webinar could be translated into the context of the students’ communities.** For example, a video about covering COVID-19 (Borio et al., 2021) notes that one of the main problems journalists face is how to report on people who have not been vaccinated without falling into traps, such as failing to consider age, income, racial and sexual diversity or politically oriented vaccine hesitancy. The objective of the exercise would be to discuss how journalists can report on COVID-19 differently today than they did at the beginning of the pandemic.

We suggest that these debates take place in **videoconferencing breakout rooms**, with the instructor selecting one student in each group to be a **summarizer**, who writes down the conclusions of the team. Once students come back to the main online session and discuss their ideas, the instructor can evaluate their participation in terms of **eloquence, logic, pertinence, relevance and correct use of applied theories, using a rubric and format clearly communicated before the debate takes place.** Once the session is over, the instructor should

keep a copy of the written conclusions developed by the summarizers to take into account in the evaluation and, optionally, to use in giving collective feedback to the teams about their conclusions and performance during the activity.

⇒ Online courses/ workshops

Various types of (very practical) lessons are available online to teach journalism students – and professional journalists – how to produce their own quality news and maintain good practices even when they are producing information from home. Many are produced in the United States, so instructors who use them may need to adapt or localize approaches, especially if teaching fully asynchronous courses, where students have fewer opportunities to ask questions in real time about local contexts.

⇒ Learning skills to produce quality news

Although it can sometimes be difficult for instructors to find open-source content to use in courses without concerns about copyright infringement, several organizations provide free videos that can be used in online courses. For instance, the **Meta Journalism Project** (2022), a multilingual collaboration between the company formerly known as Facebook and editors around the world, provides tools and inside information on fact checking, sensitive content and ads. The project's videos and text-based guides also provide very precise tips for understanding anything about creating news for the company's platforms.

In addition, the Craig Newmark Graduate School of Journalism (2021), part of the City University of New York, has often made useful videos available online. During the pandemic, it created **“remote reporter” videos focusing on reporting skills**, such as finding and using expert sources.

The **Google News Initiative** (2022) offers an online training program with a focus on online journalism, using Google tools such as Google Earth, Google Maps and YouTube. It includes a variety of tools, such as brief courses on topics such as fact checking, machine learning, multimedia storytelling, etc. (with PDF transcripts), which come with a certificate of completion.

Finally, digital newsletters such as the CFR Daily News Brief or CNN's Five Things, to name some examples, are powerful resources for students who want to stay connected to online journalism, stay on top of advertising trends and receive daily curation of the most relevant news. Newsletters can be tailored to the students' preferred topics, media outlets or language. Such a tool can also be useful for observing the trends and differences in news framing and priming, depending on media outlets' affiliations or trends. It is good to have students to identify the business sponsors of newsletters as well as the way ads are inserted into them. This can be a tool for discussing sustainable business options for news media and their alignment with like-minded sponsors as a way to preserve the integrity of the company – or to detect its bias.

An assignment that leverages these tools can task students with creating an original interactive piece based on a journalistic product they are already proud of (an article, chronicle, or news package). Here the focus is on improving an already high-quality news report by using copyright-free videos, free public databases, and Google or Facebook tools or imagining possible sponsors.

⇒ How to maintain good practices

Journalism has suffered from many heavy economic and technological transformations. As a result, **the profession – some scholars argue – is at risk of losing quality and credibility**. To address this, we provide some resources that encourage students to apply best practices.

Students might find an encouraging place to **fight against misinformation in First Draft** (Sharpen your skills, 2022), a nonprofit global network of journalists that investigates and verifies stories and, through explanatory articles and skill-building videos, teaches how to recognize and avoid the spread of misinformation. For example, First Draft offers a whole range of resources in different languages about covering coronavirus and misinformation around vaccines.

Another interesting platform is **NewsU** from the Poynter Institute for Media Studies, where students can find paid and free courses about relevant issues and skills, including reporting. This is a large portal, with a variety of resources focused on **fact checking, media literacy** and giving voice to diverse groups. For example, a whole range of free lessons on covering prisons and respecting minorities is available on NewsU.

Finally, The Journalists' Resource: Know Your Research (n.d.) is a free resource by the Shorenstein Center on Media, Politics and Public Policy at Harvard University, which provides high-level tip sheets and explainers to help journalists understand academic research methods, find and recognize high-quality research, and avoid missteps when reporting on new studies and public opinion polls.

The proposed assignment to leverage these resources is to introduce or further develop students' knowledge and implementation of investigative journalism. With the briefings and tools that are provided, students can develop a research-oriented piece on different subjects (e.g., covering COVID-19), with the objective of avoiding the mistakes that are highlighted in the resources. They can also try to find these mistakes in news outlets' reporting and analyze them, to gain practical experience in spotting reporting failures.

⇒ Social media assignment

As online journalism platforms have become more popular, the news cycle has started to develop inside the digital sphere as well, mainly through social media. One of the most relevant social media platforms for sharing, commenting on and disseminating news is Twitter, due to its concise nature and considerable audience reach. The COVID-19 pandemic has been a pivotal event for the rise of news on social media and in the digital sphere at a global level.

The role of the audience has become even more active, too. Through sharing, commenting and even directly responding to news outlets, consumers have taken an active role in the shaping of news.

From contributing to hashtag trends or having tweets or articles deleted from the platform due to the negative reaction they cause, or even encouraging more coverage of a particular case in the news, audiences have gained great power to influence the news in real time.

An interesting assignment regarding this phenomenon would be for students to **pick a subject or event featured on multiple news platforms** and monitor the kind of responses it generates on social media.

Students could start with **a trend, a hashtag or even a tweet from a news platform or opinion leader**. Then they could analyze the number of comments received, the tone of the responses (negative or positive), the number of likes and retweets, and the kind of users engaged – from basic sociodemographics to ethnicity and profession, if available.

This assignment could be focused toward helping students understand the **co-construction of news by the audience in the digital sphere**, through reflexive practices aimed at strengthening the students' skills in identifying, understanding and creating information content useful for the public interest. This understanding is quite important at a time when celebrities and influencers are weighing in on diverse matters in the news that deserve a more careful assessment and evaluation.

⇒ Conclusion

In sum, technology has become a great ally for teaching and learning purposes, and it definitively offers a wide array of resources for bringing more flexibility and openness into education. However, we cannot lose sight of the fact that the ultimate purpose of its use should be to promote the engagement of students in their own formative process and their development of critical thinking skills. In this regard, the adoption and adaptation of technological resources should be aimed at fostering students to **evaluate the context and circumstances of production**, distribution and consumption of information, leaving in a secondary place the emphasis on memory-based skills. Thus, the suggested assessments should take advantage of technology to promote debates, reflexive essays, and critical journalistic works from which the learning process could be better assessed and evaluated.

📎 Takeaways

- ▶ **Students can enhance their practical journalistic skills by using free, available resources from universities or nonprofit organizations.**
- ▶ **Distance journalism education does not mean the loss of quality journalism and good practices.**
- ▶ **Students have the possibility to think about complex issues by employing available tools that are specifically conceived for this objective, rather than relying on tools based on gamification that promote trivial quiz-based learning.**

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Chapter 5:

Using Course Management Software and Videoconferencing

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Teaching journalism online offers the possibility of having various stakeholders interact in diverse ways. You might find yourself teaching the same students who would take a face-to-face journalism course at your university, with backgrounds and preparation varying among the students in expected ways. Or you might have an online course with hundreds of students from multiple continents joining from diverse time zones, political systems, cultures and devices.

The diversity of the online cohort can be refreshing but raises questions about the feasibility of group work, the consistency of the student experience, whether synchronous learning opportunities are possible, and even whether certain course topics, such as news values or journalistic principles, will translate and be applicable to students from diverse cultures.

(In an online course that we taught for our Australian university, Singaporean students, for example, reported struggling with the “conflict” news value, which they said is absent in Singaporean media. Likewise, Aboriginal journalists sometimes critiqued the “independence” principle in journalism, which they argued is a Western value that often conflicts with Indigenous values where connection to community and land is paramount.)

Catering to an online and potentially diverse student cohort requires, in many ways, a radically different approach from face-to-face teaching. This chapter aims to help instructors use digital spaces and tools by outlining best practices related to the design and use of course management software and videoconferencing to support student learning.

⇒ Using course management software

Many journalism programs are part of universities that support one or more learning **management systems (LMS), such as Sakai, Blackboard, or Canvas**. While they all deliver essential functionality—a way for instructors and students to communicate, a gradebook, a file repository, and a portal for accepting and evaluating student assignments—they are, to varying degrees, generally clunky, unpleasant, and lacking in finesse. You can improve their design and functionality, but first it’s smart to ensure your course structure is clear and well-organized. We have successfully deployed a one-page overview of both timeline and class structure and found that students have regarded this overview extremely positively.

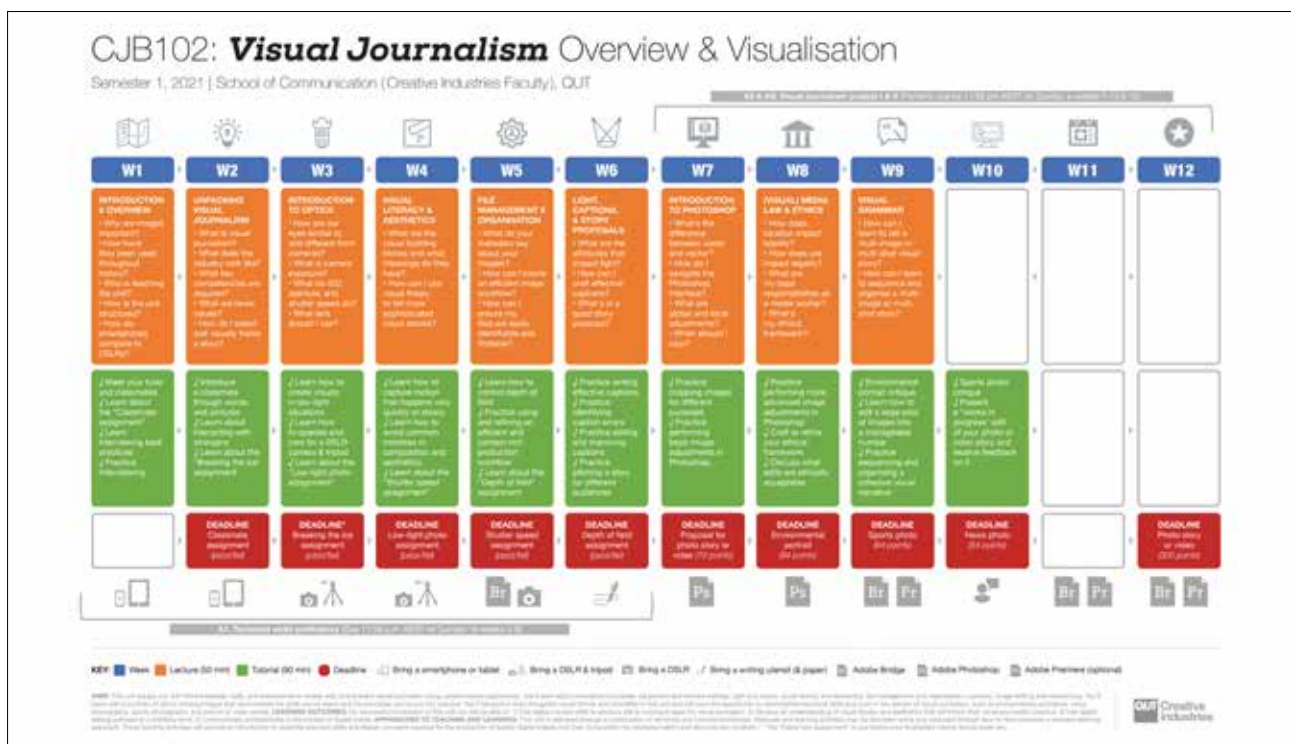


Figure 1. One-page visual class overview. Whether teaching face-to-face or online, a clear, easy-to-comprehend class structure and timeline is essential. | Graphic by T.J. Thomson

When it comes to organizing your LMS, core “tabs” or links to pages you might like to include on your LMS class homepage include: a **frequently asked questions (FAQ) page**, which can drastically reduce the number of

emails generated by students with oft-asked questions; an **announcements page** where you can provide and archive class-wide updates; a **roadmap page** where you visually provide an overview of your course's structure; a **contact page** with a list of the teaching team members; a **discussion board or equivalent page** where students can communicate with each other about course-related topics; a **page for each assignment type**; and one or more **pages for learning resources**. Your university will likely pre-populate your LMS template with additional core pages, such as a "My grades" page or a page for "University-wide language and learning support."

As you organize your LMS, be sensitive to how much material is contained *within* each page. There's a temptation to think the fewer the tabs or links on the homepage the better, but the student feedback we have received is that one massive tab or link, such as "learning resources," leading to a page requiring lots of scrolling or swiping to navigate, can be overwhelming and can make key information hard to find. Consider breaking up a "Learning resources" page or tab into more discrete top-level pages, such as one for lecture or tutorial recordings, one for class readings, one for templates or handouts you have created for the class, and one with past examples of student work. **Giving visibility** to these important resources on your course's homepage will help students more easily navigate the course structure and find the resources they need.

When it comes to upgrading the design or functionality of your LMS, third-party plug-ins or resources, such as those you can author with a platform from **Articulate.com, Teachable.com, or Thinkific.com**, can elevate how you present class information and enable students to interact with it more efficiently. It's worth checking to see whether your institution holds an institutional license for such services or whether you and your colleagues could make a collective case at the department, school, or college level for acquiring them.

These tools are more than just flashy ways of attracting attention; they also enable a key component of pedagogy, active learning (Brame, 2016), to be integrated into your LMS. This can transform passive learning materials into **dynamic environments that allow interactivity and enable choice, which is critical for participation and engagement** (Misseynanni et al., 2018). Such resources can also provide formative feedback to students and can also (through self-assessment quizzes or usage data) help identify students who might need additional support because they are not getting a concept.

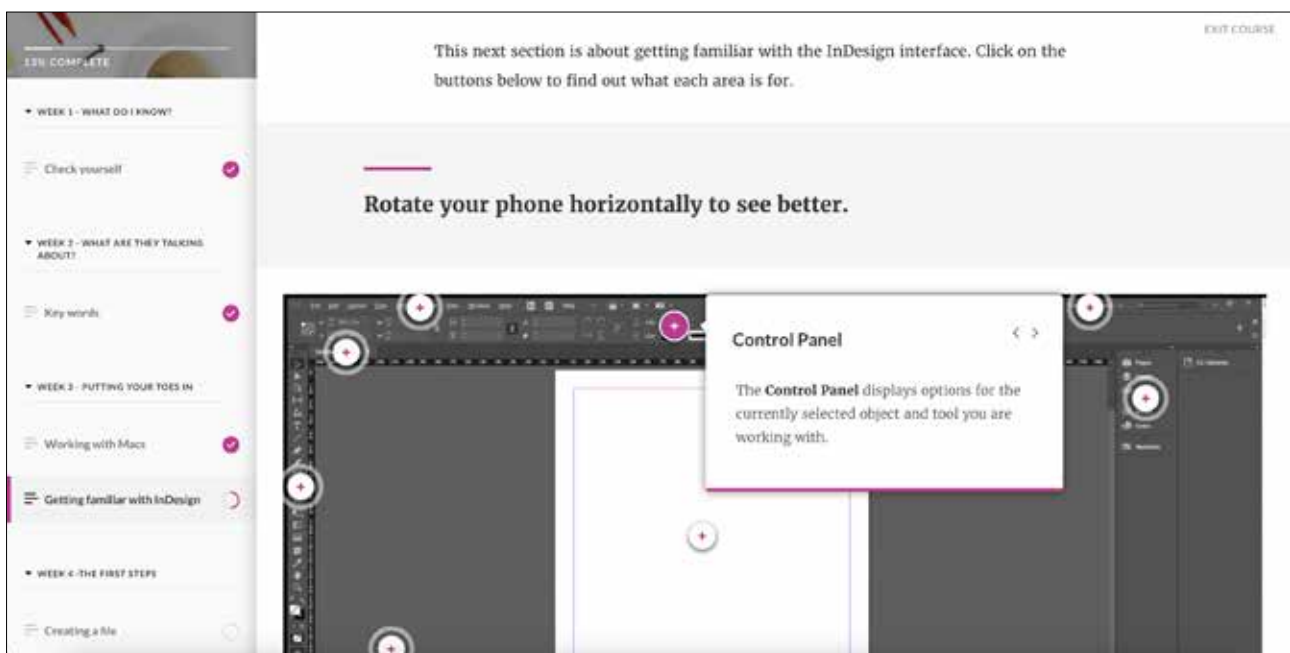


Figure 2. A third-party learning resource. *This bespoke learning resource, developed in Articulate Rise 360, is responsive across devices and allows students the choice of what to learn and in which order.*

⇒ Using videoconferencing to support student learning

When using videoconferencing to support student learning, care must be taken to not merely replicate a face-to-face approach in an online context. The environments are different and deserve unique approaches (Stein and Graham, 2020). For example, there's a different sort of **experience and intimacy** with learning from screens that are held in one's hand or rest on one's lap rather than learning from content projected on a wall in a traditional classroom. If the course or module is designed well, this intimacy can translate into a learning experience that is richer, more interactive and more fulfilling for student and teacher alike.

The dynamics of videoconferencing can also mean that some students with more familiarity with online environments or higher levels of literacy might be more active than other students with lower levels of experience or literacy. Actively encourage perspectives from all segments of the class and not just the students who are most comfortable participating. Also design your learning activities so that students with different literacies and levels of comfort can take part. One way to do this is to use **breakout rooms to encourage learning in a lower-stakes environment**. Students might be more willing to express their views among a small group of peers than before the entire class and the instructor.

We use videoconferencing software in one of the units we teach, production journalism, to facilitate a series of **live copy-editing exercises** during which students display their work on a shared screen and their peers take turns editing it in real time. In another unit we teach, visual journalism, we use tethering tools, such as **Reflector Teacher**, with videoconferencing software to share what our phone cameras see and how changing settings changes the camera's vision and the images it captures. Both of these activities are examples of **higher-order learning** (Bloom, 2001) that should be reserved for synchronous interaction. In a journalism teaching context, such higher-order learning might include copy editing to identify grammar or spelling errors or errors of fact. It might also include discussing why a particular way of framing a story is more effective than others for a particular audience or applying conceptual knowledge (a story structure or compositional rules in photography or design) to the creation and structuring of a message. Lower-order learning, like remembering and understanding, can ideally be outsourced to the LMS, so that precious live interaction time can be saved for higher-order learning (Talbert, 2017).

Lower-order learning in a journalism teaching context includes, for example, remembering how to write dates in AP style or understanding why the inverted pyramid story structure places the most important information at the beginning.

Built-in videoconference functions aren't always the best

When using videoconferencing to support student learning, use the chat function strategically. Chat can be fine for questions that require only a single response (e.g., "Can you see the screen I'm sharing?") but becomes ineffective and overwhelming when trying to encourage participation across the full student cohort.

Rather than tell students "Please enter in the chat your idea for your week six feature-story assignment," we sometimes make **online spreadsheets with pre-populated columns** and ask each student to fill out a row. That way, we can quickly make sense of all the responses, sort them, and have a productive discussion about any red flags or issues. Having students submit to an online spreadsheet also allows us to easily gauge participation and identify students who haven't responded, so that we can see if they need help brainstorming a suitable topic. We create a simple short link to the spreadsheet (something like bit.ly/ClassNameWeekNumber) so students can easily access the spreadsheet and return to it later.

Think expansively about how videoconferencing can be used

Videoconferencing need not be limited to tutorial-style activities between the teaching team and students. You can also use it to **integrate professionals' experiences into the classroom**. Getting a local journalist to visit campus – giving up several hours in navigating traffic, finding parking and locating an often-obscure building – can sometimes be difficult. In addition, many professionals aren't used to delivering presentations for an hour or more. Using videoconferencing, however, you can easily have an industry guest, even one who lives far away, visit for a 10- or 15-minute session to share some relevant insights with your students in a time-effective and impactful manner.

You can also use videoconferencing to foster collaborations between or among other universities or student media outlets to produce content. Professionals use online connection tools to produce groundbreaking work, such as the Panama papers (which involved more than 100 outlets in 80 countries). Drawing inspiration from this collaboration, you could partner with other universities in your state or region to work collaboratively on an issue that affects your shared communities and provide students with real-world collaboration and team management skills.

partner with other universities in your state or region to work collaboratively on an issue that affects your shared communities

⇒ Identifying and mitigating challenges when teaching journalism online

If an online journalism course involves working with students from far-flung time zones, using videoconferencing can be logistically challenging. Access to high-quality internet remains uneven in portions of the developed world (Hargittai, 2003), and this can translate to internet connectivity or bandwidth issues that result in a laggy and sub-optimal experience. Whether students are joining from desktops, laptops or mobile devices can also impact their participation and connection speeds. Likewise, the time zones involved can potentially make live attendance impractical if not impossible.

Recording learning activities held through videoconferencing can be a helpful option for those who cannot attend live, but it isn't a panacea. Students who are not able to attend live can be robbed of the opportunity to get instant feedback and to form connections with their peers. A mix of asynchronous and synchronous activities (Giesbers et al., 2014), however, can allow connections to happen both in real-time and at intervals that suit each party. It can also be wise to provide a mechanism, such as a Google Form or a Dropbox link, to allow students who can't attend a live videoconference class to **submit in advance questions or work-in-progress** that can be addressed during the live learning opportunities. Students can then watch recordings and learn from feedback, even if they can't attend live.

It's worth noting that if students are asked to complete a task during a live class meeting (either alone or in breakout rooms), the recording will have gaps of dead space where the students are working as the instructor waits. Including timestamps with the recording link will let those who watch the recording later jump easily to different sections without scrubbing through dead space or worrying about missing content.

Lack of feedback

Teaching online while using videoconferencing can be an intimidating and clinical experience if students have videos off for privacy or internet speed reasons. Asking students to at least **upload a photo of themselves** – so

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that an avatar, rather than just a name, exists – can be helpful in fostering a sense of community and creating a more personable experience (Themelis & Sime, 2020). If [internet speeds or privacy concerns prevent students from participating with their cameras on](#), it can be helpful to encourage students to provide feedback through emoji or their microphones.

This feedback also extends to the student's in-class journalistic output: the story drafts, grammar exercises, or photo- or video-editing operations, which an instructor could see in a face-to-face classroom by looking over shoulders. This feedback is critical and can allow instructors to a) know whether a student "gets it" and b) gauge the student's progress, which can affect the pacing of the learning activity. These complications are potentially compounded in breakout rooms.

Asking students to share their own screens can be a fraught exercise depending, once more, on connection speeds or privacy issues, and it can also be intimidating to spotlight one student's work to the entire class. We try to mitigate these issues by establishing from the outset the [importance of critique and feedback and also modeling self-vulnerability](#). We share drafts of our early—and often very messy—work to illustrate that any [creative endeavor is an iterative process](#) and work can always be improved.

On a more practical level, providing students with a link to an upload-only cloud storage folder and asking them to upload drafts of class exercises can be effective for taking the pulse of student learning and offering real-time feedback and encouragement. The instructor can spotlight one or more of these assets to make points that are relevant for others and can also ensure that all students' work is considered, which isn't always possible when relying solely on those who volunteer to share.



Conclusion

No matter the number of students or time zones involved, teaching online is qualitatively different from teaching face-to-face. But with careful planning, design, and use of third-party tools and resources, online teaching can result in a rich and interactive suite of learning activities that cater to people regardless of time, location, or culture. It can—and arguably should—also [foster collaboration across institutional boundaries](#) and result in more bold, innovative, large-scale projects that aspiring journalists and student media outlets can accomplish together to marry learning with professional practice.

Takeaways

- ▶ **Create a one-page visual overview of your class structure and timeline so assignment deadlines, topics and activities for each module – and required equipment or software is clearly visible and easy-to-understand.**
- ▶ **Explore third-party plug-ins or resources to elevate and augment the basic functionality of your university's learning management system.**
- ▶ **Privilege higher-order learning—such as analysis, evaluation, and creation—during synchronous activities.**
- ▶ **Outsource lower- and mid-order learning, such as remembering, understanding, and applying, to asynchronous activities on your university's learning management system.**
- ▶ **The built-in videoconference functions, such as the chat feature, aren't always the best for every purpose. Think carefully about which ones would work better with a third-party solution.**
- ▶ **Use videoconferencing to augment the perspectives you bring into your virtual classroom.**
- ▶ **Consider recording synchronous learning activities but understand doing so isn't a panacea for those unable to attend or participate live.**

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Chapter 6:

Using low-fi methods for online teaching in scarce-resource settings

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In 2020, COVID-19 affected educational institutions around the world, leading to closures of schools to avoid transmitting the virus (Tadesse and Muluye, 2020). The necessity of the closures created difficulties for educational institutions, instructors and students. To allow students to continue their education safely, online teaching became the norm. However, the lack of network infrastructure, computers, and internet access caused a challenge for developing countries such as Ghana. This chapter draws on personal experience to explore the use of **low-fi methods for online teaching in resource-scarce settings** such as Ghana.

Ghana's attempt at implementing information and communications technology (ICT) in its educational setup has been slow, due, in part, to the **high cost of information and communication infrastructure and a lack of technical expertise** (Grimus et al., 2013).

Overcrowding, dwindling physical facilities, limited and obsolete library resources, and insufficient equipment and instructional materials (ALU, 2015) make it difficult for most people to access education.

This arguably is contrary to the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development adopted by the United Nations in 2015, which advocates for an inclusive and equitable quality education and for the promotion of lifelong learning opportunities for all as part of its Sustainable Development Goals (SDG). Online teaching and learning was adopted as one of the means to resolve some of these challenges and to provide an alternative to the on-campus teaching and learning experience. A delay in the adoption and implementation of online teaching and learning in Ghana has been attributed to an absence of efficient and effective technological facilities.

When the COVID-19 pandemic struck, leading to the closure of schools and the transition to online teaching, tertiary institutions in Ghana – and the Ghana Institute of Journalism (GIJ) in particular – had to start offering journalism courses online. This led to some challenges for policy makers, lecturers and students, although it also provided some opportunities (Toquero, 2020).

⇒ Case study: Journalism education in the Republic of Ghana

Ghana, the first country in West Africa to get independence from British rule, in 1957, is considered one of the stable countries in the region, having successfully organized seven consecutive presidential and parliamentary elections since its transition to multi-party democracy in 1992. Ghana, which has 30.8 million people in sixteen administrative regions and 260 districts (Ghana districts: A repository of all local assemblies in Ghana, 2006) is noted for its adherence to media freedom and independence. The 2021 World Press Freedom Index ranked Ghana the thirtieth in the world for media freedom and third in Africa, behind Namibia and Cape Verde. Ghana constitutes an ideal case study to illustrate online teaching in resource-scarce settings because it fits into Tadesse and Muluye's (2020) findings regarding the challenges faced by developing countries for online teaching.

Lack of internet access and stability, however, has kept Ghana from embracing online teaching as a new norm. According to Sasu (2021), the diffusion of internet access in Ghana as of January 2021 was 50 percent, below the global average rate of 59.9 per cent. Out of 301 accredited tertiary education institutions, only two have been accredited to run distance learning. While some attribute this to a slow approach to adopting the idea of distance education, others argue that the low wifi bandwidth situation is a factor.

Instructors were forced, however, to try online approaches after Ghana recorded its first two cases of COVID-19 on March 12, 2020, and the president of Ghana announced the closure of schools on March 16. With the pandemic showing no signs of stopping, measures to curtail the spread of the virus were introduced, and GIJ followed them.

The 2021 World Press Freedom Index ranked Ghana the

30th

in the world for media freedom and

3rd

in Africa, behind Namibia and Cape Verde.

⇒ Creative and flexible teaching methods under technological constraints

GIJ was established in 1959 as the first journalism training school in West Africa, designed to teach journalists to play an active role in the African emancipation struggle. It changed from a diploma-awarding institution to a university in 2016. Recently, GIJ has been merged with the Ghana Institute of Languages (GIL) and National Film and Television Institute (NAFTI) to form the University of Media, Arts and Communication, Act 2020, which is the 1059 Act of the Parliament of the Republic of Ghana, assented to on 29th December 2020.

GIJ had no policy or guideline on using online teaching and learning to reach students at home – some living in rural communities with no internet access and, in some places, an unstable electricity supply. An ad-hoc committee was set up by management to propose modalities to migrate students online to complete the semester. Lecturers adopted different modes, using Google classroom, WhatsApp, Microsoft Teams, MS Office 365, Skype and Zoom. To standardize the platforms, the school adopted MS Office 365, which was used to share lecture materials and post assignments and, later, receive submissions by students. **WhatsApp** was used as the main communication medium among the school, lecturers and students because every group had a WhatsApp platform. The IT department was asked to provide the Learning Managements System (LMS) **Moodle** for conducting examinations.

After the lecturers created course materials and posted them in a folder, a link to the folder was copied and shared in **Google Classroom** with students, who received a notification through their email. Students used the same link to upload their work. Because of the practical nature of the courses being taught in GIJ, students were encouraged to create videos and audio using Office 365 software, generate links and send them to the lecturers. These steps were taken mindful of the challenges that students faced in terms of **internet access, instability and prohibitive cost and, in some instances, a lack of smartphones and laptops/computers.**

Meanwhile, the institution had an increasing population of students (which has arguably been attributed to the attraction of communication related courses) without a corresponding increase in the number of lecturers. This is because the clearance to recruit full-time lectures was only partially given to the school by the government within the last two academic years. The students who lacked access to equipment or the internet were encouraged to use the library facilities at GIJ and other tertiary institutions. For those who could not, some of the lectures were recorded and posted as **voice notes** on common platforms to be accessed using **mobile phones**, which the majority of the students had access to. With regard to examinations, those who could not take online examinations were allowed to take the exams in person under strict COVID-19 protocols.

⇒ Challenges and opportunities

Initially, some lecturers were not very motivated to teach online because they were concerned about the **cost of data for online teaching**, but this was partly resolved by management of the school with a financial contribution for the lecturers to purchase data. Students were also given data. Other challenges that arose:

- Online skills courses were particularly impacted by unequal availability of wifi or slow, unstable and expensive wifi.
- Some students were unable to engage in online classes at all, while those who could engage attended irregularly.

- Some lecturers could not teach online, insisting on maintaining face-to-face lecturing with strict COVID-19 protocols.
- The assumption that all students are familiar with platforms such as Zoom, the preferred mode of teaching by some lecturers, was a miscalculation. A small number of the students, less than three percent based on the informal complaints received by lecturers and IT staff, were unfamiliar with the Zoom application and had to be given basic training in its usage. Their classmates who were familiar with the program were also asked to assist them.
- Online teaching and learning, however, encouraged self-learning by the students, and some lecturers also benefited from learning new online teaching techniques and tools. Online learning increased student and teacher collaboration, allowing students to learn from the comfort of their homes or wherever they had access to equipment and internet—although sometimes the environment posed difficulties, with family interruptions during lectures and some students joining lectures from public transport or other public places.

⇒ Recommendations

The recommendations below are based on takeaways from journalism faculty who taught online at GUJ, mostly unplanned, initially during the COVID-19 pandemic.

Recommendation for instructors

- Instructors teaching in low-resource situations should **avoid harsh punishments for non-compliance with instructions or submission deadlines**. Online learning, which should be flexible, could become more chaotic and elitist if slow wifi and scarce-resource situations are not addressed (Upadhyay, 2020).
- Students with unreliable internet connectivity should be advised to **turn off their video** stream and make contributions or ask questions in a chat or in text, depending on the medium, to save bandwidth.
- Instructors should **space out dates and time for assignments**, so students can plan for all contingencies.
- Lecturers should post materials as text instead of attachments and allow students to submit their work on a pen drive.
- **Lectures** should be recorded and uploaded to a shared area where students can view them **without having to download materials**, with an explanation given about how to locate the materials.
- Instructors and students should **prepare to lose internet access**. Lecturers should post resources in advance and advise students what to do when an internet connection is lost.

Recommendations for universities and policy-makers

- National educational policy-makers should collaborate with internet network providers to provide **public wifi hotspots**.
- Institutions of higher learning should be flexible, having tailor-made interventions for students and **identifying students with low internet speeds**.

Recommendation for students

- Most students have experience with online or hybrid teaching from some institution. Therefore, students should endeavor to share with instructors their views about what works for them and what does not.

- Students should seek out public wifi systems, such as those maintained by some libraries, so that they can move to those places to work if necessary.



Conclusion

The COVID-19 pandemic disrupted education worldwide, prompting the transition to online teaching and learning – in the case of GIJ, in a hurried manner with no policy or guidelines in place. In an environment of **low wifi bandwidth and scarce resources**, the outcome was a mixed experience. Some students had issues with accessing course materials or submitting work. The positive aspect of online teaching and learning under these limitations, however, is clear. Adopting flexible teaching methods and using different platforms for delivering lectures helped to provide a positive teaching and learning experience for the instructors and students. This outcome has led to a policy recognition of online teaching and learning by GIJ and the incorporation of hybrid teaching and learning as part of the institution's policy architecture. As a result, the school has decided that online learning is now part of the standard teaching methodology.



Takeaways

- 1. Adopt flexible teaching methods to account for students' lack of access to equipment or the internet.**
- 2. Use mobile devices and different platforms, after ensuring that students have access to them and know how to use them.**
- 3. Collaborate with network providers to provide public wifi hotspots.**

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Part II:

The human side of online teaching



Chapter 7:

Fostering community and engagement in online 'classrooms'

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Where are my students? First-time online instructors, especially those accustomed to a lecture-based course, often ask that question. [Online learning stretches the definition of a 'classroom,'](#) but instructors can design courses that foster community and engagement to promote learning.

Clark and Mayer (2016, p. 222) describe three steps for online learning:

The learner's attention is drawn to important information in the lesson.

1. The learner integrates the instructional items with each other, based partly on prior knowledge.
2. The learner retains new knowledge for future transfer to professional settings.

Due to an initial lack of community among learners, online instructors need to design a course curriculum so that students have regular interactions with classmates and the instructor. Regardless of whether the class is asynchronous or includes real-time video meetings, quality

education 'requires an engaging, highly interactive experience tailored to the needs of particular students' (Mintz, 2021).

⇒ Starting the course

For online courses, setting an engaging climate in the course opening gives online learners a sense of safety, comfort and belonging (Bonk and Khoo, 2014, p. 48). In an asynchronous online course, instructors can use a **discussion forum for students to share their academic background, professional experience (if applicable), career aspirations and motivation** for taking the course. Instructors may also ask students to share bits of casual information – such as a favorite book, band or movie – to make a personal connection. If instructors compose brief responses to students' discussion posts, students gain an immediate sense that the course is being taught by a person and not a learning management system.

Classes with large enrollment sometimes yield unwieldy discussion forums that can seem overwhelming. One way to minimize this problem is to divide students into smaller group discussion forums of four or five students each, thus creating a **system of study buddies**. Each group's workspace can include opportunities for members to add their own discussion topics and plan their own real-time video meetings.

As part of the class opening, many instructors record a short informal video to introduce themselves to class members. The video can include advice for navigating instructional materials, submitting assignments and following the course schedule.

⇒ Active learning

Beyond the opening weeks of the course, a **constructivist approach to lesson planning** – which views learning as active, instead of passive – can foster community and engagement. A simple, worthwhile practice is to incorporate a to-do list of goals and learning activities at the start of each lesson. Simply put, students cannot be active, engaged learners if they are unsure about what they should be doing.

It's easy to envision activities for journalism students in an engaging online course:

- Interview sources
- Research archived documents
- Analyze data
- Write and edit stories
- Take photographs
- Shoot and produce video
- Record and edit audio
- Design informative graphics
- Package an interactive multimedia story

One can argue that journalism courses are ideal spaces for active learning in an online environment.

⇒ R2D2

A valuable strategy for increasing student engagement is R2D2, which stands for **Read, Reflect, Display and Do**. This instructional design concept, developed by Curtis J. Bonk and Ke Zhang (2006), offers a way for instructors to 'organize and make sense of the diverse array of instructional possibilities' (p. 249) for formatting online courses. Students advance from concrete information in the 'Read' category to application and decision-making in the 'Do' category.

By using R2D2 in online curriculum development, hesitant instructors can evolve to become 'models and advocates of online education' (Bonk and Khoo, 2014, p. 288). The next sections of this chapter will be used to describe each category in more detail.

Read

For online journalism courses, the 'Read' category involves more than text. It can include **video, audio and interactive content** used to support a lesson's learning goals. Bonk and Zhang (2006) call this 'reading, listening, and knowledge acquisition' (p. 252). Here are a few common content items:

- Textbook chapters
- Internal text or multimedia content created by the instructor for the course
- External articles, infographics, and images
- External video (such as YouTube content)
- External audio (such as a podcast episode or a news summary)

A lesson on **journalistic codes of ethics**, for example, might include brief introductory audio from the instructor, links to several professional codes of ethics, and an external video chronicling a recent case study. In the 'Read' category, it's all about content that leads students to acquire knowledge.

Reflect

After students have studied assigned content, they should reflect on what they have learned. The second 'R' focuses on 'the observational side of learning' (Bonk and Khoo, 2014, p. 9). Reflections typically involve low-stakes activities with less-formal assessment. A teaching guide from DePaul University notes that low-stakes assignments, such as **short reflective journal entries**, 'open up lines of communication between students and their instructors and may increase students' willingness to ask for help.'

One common tool for reflection is a group discussion involving a case study. Someone, often the instructor, needs to 'kick start the conversation' (Adams, 2018, p. 67), usually by providing a summary of the case study along with supporting links for additional information. A **case-based discussion** forum can incorporate text, images, video and/or audio, either in the initial forum prompt or through student responses. As a discussion forum assignment in a journalistic lesson about truth and accountability in advertising, for example, each student could find and share a video or graphic example of an advertisement that contains unverified and potentially dangerous claims. Students would be required to analyze how word choice and images in each example might pose a threat to consumers.

Discussion board assignments are frequently used to foster a sense of community in online classes. Many instructors, especially those teaching asynchronous online courses, attempt to replicate conversations that develop organically in face-to-face classrooms. They assign students to post a response to a question or other

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prompt within the discussion format of a learning management system, typically once a week. Students who wait until the last minute to submit a response, however, may not take time to read their classmates' posts, thus missing an opportunity to learn from peers.

To combat this problem, instructors can use two deadlines within each lesson or learning module: one for each student to post an original submission and one requiring each student to respond to a certain number of classmates. I use a slightly different strategy, alternating between an initial discussion forum assignment in one lesson followed by required student responses to classmates in the next lesson. This helps ensure that students who barely meet the deadline for their own discussion post in one lesson will still return to the same discussion forum to see reflections submitted by classmates. The instructional goal is for learners to have **regular reminders that other students are taking the course with them**.

Another tool for low-stakes reflection is a journal. Prompts for each journal entry can be similar to those in a discussion forum. For a journal, though, only the instructor can read a student's submission. This leads to individual communication between the instructor and student.

For example, in a journal entry for a writing class, I ask students to read two features about the same person; one is a traditional feature story with multiple interview sources and the other is a question-and-answer piece with only the interviewee as a source. Students submit a written reflection on the advantages and disadvantages of the Q-and-A format, and I provide a brief typed response to each student.

Other instructors may prefer to use voice notes for quick feedback on journals.

Beyond discussion forums and journals, Bonk and Zhang (2006, p. 249) include **video chats with professionals, role-playing exercises, brief summary papers and annotations** as examples of learning activities for the second R. In asynchronous classes, some instructors **schedule video conversations with working journalists** and record those sessions. Students have the option to join the real-time video conversation or view a recording later.

Display

In traditional on-campus courses, instructors often administer high-stakes exams to assess student comprehension of key concepts. Exams can be used in an online course as well, but they have limited value for fostering engagement and a sense of community. As an alternative, the R2D2 approach emphasizes student-generated visuals and demonstrations. Bonk and Zhang (2006) include **graphic visuals, online tours and presentations, timelines and written critiques** as examples of learning activities that allow students to display their understanding.

Most activities in the 'Display' category differ from standard writing assignments. Instead, they focus on representations of **how students visualize and construct knowledge**. In a lesson for an introductory media class, for example, students can initially read and reflect on study materials about the history of radio and audio recording. Then, to display their understanding, they can create their own timeline in which they identify the 10 most significant milestones in the history of radio, including a brief paraphrased summary for each item in their timeline.

Do

The last quadrant of the R2D2 model 'involves having learners applying what they have learned, reflected on, and visualized in practice exercises or in the real world' (Bonk and Zhang (2006, p. 260). Sample activities

for the 'Do' category include an explanation of an **online database, an oral history, survey research, case simulations and personal performances**.

In journalism courses delivered online, personal performances can involve the active-learning tasks listed earlier in this chapter. Students can interview, research, analyze, write, produce, record, photograph, design and edit. Because most journalism instructors are familiar with planning assignments that require hands-on skills development, the 'Do' components may seem easier to incorporate into an online course.

For example, one online instructor who teaches a multimedia journalism course requires students to produce a feature story on a small local business. Students conduct research and prepare questions for a recorded audio interview, then create a **multimedia package containing a short story, edited audio clips and a photo essay**.

In the 'Do' category, students often benefit by seeing examples from other students instead of viewing only professional examples. For a course assignment that requires students to create an infographic, I compile an online gallery of the best submissions by previous students in the course. After all students have completed their own infographics, I also share, with permission, two or three of the best submissions from the current class.

Authentic, individual feedback is crucial for keeping students engaged in media production assignments.

For assignments involving web publishing and graphics software, I sometimes give students who struggle with their first submission a second chance to improve their work based on my initial feedback. This increases their hands-on time with course technology tools and lets them learn from their mistakes.

For larger projects, multiple progress checkpoints can be used to provide feedback and ensure that students do not procrastinate. An extensive writing project, for example, might include separate student submissions for an initial proposal, a compilation of potential sources, a rough outline and the final product.



Conclusion

Proponents of the R2D2 model acknowledge that 'many activities take place in two or more phases of the model' (Bonk and Khoo, 2014, p. 10). This can be a strength of R2D2 rather than a weakness. Overall, the goal is to incorporate **active learning experiences** that lead to authentic, individualized feedback.

A final recommendation on student engagement is for the instructor to invite students to share their questions or concerns on a regular basis. The medium for this communication is the instructor's choice. For students to gain a sense of community in their online 'classroom,' they should feel comfortable asking questions and seeking guidance.



Takeaways

- ▶ **Instructors should build active learning experiences into an online course design.**
- ▶ **Instructors can use the R2D2 (Read, Reflect, Display, Do) instructional model to prioritize student engagement.**
- ▶ **Instructors should provide authentic, individualized feedback.**

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Chapter 8:

Working with various types of learners online

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No matter how you deliver your online course content – asynchronously or synchronously – you need to be mindful of how your students learn. As instructors, our goal should be to create [student-centered teaching environments](#), not teacher-centered courses.

In a student-centered environment, the instructor's teaching style veers toward that of a [coach or facilitator](#), who encourages students to achieve the established course learning outcomes through their active and collaborative participation in the process. In contrast, in a teacher-centered teaching environment, students passively interact with course content, often through a traditional lecture-based teaching style. The focus is on the amount of content presented in the course.

Some instructors may feel that a teacher-oriented environment works best for presenting material in online journalism courses. But stepping outside your comfort zone – challenging yourself to create a more student-participatory online class setting – can help you create a better learning environment for *all* your students.

So how do we create a student-centered teaching environment? Not by clinging to the idea that individual students learn in only one style. Focusing on individual student learning styles became popular in the 1970s and 1980s with the **VAK (video, audio, kinesthetic) or VARK (video, audio, reading/writing, kinesthetic) models**. These models posited that each student had a primary learning style: visual, in which the student learned through seeing; auditory, in which the focus was on learning through listening; reading and writing, in which the student preferred taking notes and/or reading textbooks; or kinesthetic (tactile), in which touching or being involved in a physical activity was the basis of learning. Over the years, however, this approach has not been supported by cognitive science, which suggests, instead, that **students' abilities, interests and prior knowledge are more important variables** for educators to consider (Miller, 2017; Kirschner, 2017).

⇒ **Universal Design for Learning (UDL)**

Because students learn through a combination of methods, not just a single dominant style, the goal of online journalism courses should be to present content in ways that will benefit *all* students. "The most recent argument indicates that to reach all types of learners, we need **Universal Design for Learning (UDL)**," said Emtinan Alqurashi, the assistant director of educational technology at Temple University's Center for the Advancement of Teaching (CAT). "UDL encourages instructors to create flexible learning environments to accommodate individual learning differences."

She explained there are three ways to do this.

First, instructors can provide multiple ways to present information – the “what” of learning. This means sharing content in multiple modalities, such as through video, audio, and text. Second, instructors can provide multiple types of engagement, through a variety of activities other than lectures – the “why” of learning. Instructors can use case studies, group projects, or discussion groups to connect students with content that is relevant and interesting to them. Finally, instructors can offer multiple ways for students to express what they know – the “how” of learning. This means using different assessment techniques – such as reflections, peer reviews and presentations – in addition to traditional exams and quizzes.

UDL is an accepted teaching framework for traditional face-to-face settings. It has also emerged as an appropriate approach for online learning (Scott, Temple and Marshall, 2015).

⇒ **Ways to address disparities in learning abilities**

Keeping the tenets of UDL in mind, instructors should be creative in the way they provide content to students. One lesson from the COVID-19 pandemic is that the existence of **social disparities became universally apparent**. As instructors, we are often not aware of the various obstacles our students face trying to function in an online environment. In a given course, some students may have technology-access challenges. Others may not have developed sophisticated digital skills.

UDL addresses such disparities by providing multiple means of information delivery. For example, an instructor using video in an asynchronous or synchronous online course can activate closed captioning and, in some **video-conferencing platforms, produce a transcript of the session**. The resulting components can be uploaded to a web-based learning management system, such as **Canvas, Moodle, or Blackboard**. This means students have access to course information in three formats, not only to the recorded video but also an audio file and a transcript. Transcripts presume students can read; giving students access to audio files as well helps address reading or vision deficiencies.

Alqurashi reminds us that something as simple as uploading to a learning management system text saved as an image file, rather than as a PDF, can be problematic for a variety of students, including those who are **visually impaired or face language barriers**. That's because screen readers, optimized for reading PDFs, cannot read images. Making minor adjustments, such as uploading documents as PDFs rather than image files, can help different types of learners access course materials.

⇒ **Ways to address technological barriers**

As instructors, we also need to be mindful of our online technology upgrades. In many ways we are learners, too, as we work to keep up with various new tools. As an example, in answer to requests during the pandemic, **Zoom added a live transcript feature** that the instructor can enable to give students access to real-time closed captioning. If not needed, this function can be turned off by the viewer. Closed captioning is also available through Google Slides and PowerPoint. Technology teaching tools are constantly evolving.

These advances in teaching technology tools are good. As instructors, however, we must **not assume that our students are digital natives** – that they come to our online classroom knowing how to apply the latest technology to their learning process. Once we are comfortable with newer tools, we should teach and model how they can be used in the online teaching and learning environment, being mindful that some students may not have access to experiment and develop a comfort level with these tools.

⇒ **Ways to consider diversity and inclusion**

The UDL model also tells us to connect students with content that is relevant and interesting. In doing this, representation is important. As we develop course content, we need to **be mindful of diverse representation in text authors, multimedia representations**, and other course materials, so that the materials speak to diverse populations of students.

If you cannot find relevant content on a topic that is representative of diverse voices, then that is a conversation worth having with students. We can also encourage students to bring content into the course, which empowers them to also have a stake in their learning.

UDL also stresses the multiple ways in which students can express what they know. Not all students participate by asking questions and contributing to class discussions. Some may be hesitant for culture-based reasons or simply shyness. So it is important to diversify your assessment tools so that students are given several different ways to demonstrate their knowledge or engage with the material.

The importance of these principles is reinforced by a study published in 2019 that looked at the online teaching practices of award-winning faculty (Kumar et al., 2019). The authors asked the eight respondents what made their online course exemplary, and several themes – some of them consistent with UDL models – emerged:

- Authentic and relevant course materials that **connect to practice**
- The use of multimedia resources
- Student creation of digital content individually and collaboratively
- Students' reflection on learning
- The instructor's explanation of the purpose of activities, technologies, and assessments in the online course.



Conclusion

In conclusion, as you create your online class, keep the UDL method in mind, considering three questions:

- **What are the best ways to present course content?** I am a big proponent of embedding digital resources such as audio, video and animation clips into my lecture PowerPoints. I am constantly watching TV news programs, documentaries and cable for content I can bring into the course. For audio clips, I find National Public Radio programming and podcasts are chock full of interesting and up-to-date journalistic content.
- **What are activities outside of lectures that can be used to engage learners?** I take advantage of embedded multimedia content by posing questions after students have viewed the material, which encourages them to review the posted information. In an asynchronous environment, I might ask students to respond to a question in a discussion board post. I usually set the options so the students must post before seeing classmates' replies. Sometimes, instead of using the discussion board, I ask for the response as part of a written assignment. In a synchronous environment, I often put students in breakout rooms for a specified period, and then I ask them to report back to the larger group.
- **What are a variety of assessment techniques you can employ?** I often assign short course reflection and/or discussion papers. This helps create a more robust student-teacher relationship in that it presents an opportunity to more deeply engage the students individually through feedback. Also, these assignments usually provide an unfiltered glimpse into their thinking or point-of-view. I also give quizzes, group and individual presentation projects, final exams and final papers.

Takeaways

- ▶ **The goal should be to create a student-centered teaching environment, not a teacher-centered one.**
- ▶ **Universal Design for Learning (UDL) encourages instructors to create flexible learning environments to accommodate individual learning differences in a way that all students will benefit.**
- ▶ **Instructors should challenge themselves to stay digitally literate and willing to step outside their comfort zone by using and sharing with students content generated multiple ways, via both online learning management systems and video conferencing platforms.**
- ▶ **There is a longstanding assumption in higher education that instructors can automatically teach well in their area of expertise. Many graduate-level programs have optional, not required pedagogy courses. Therefore, it is not surprising that many colleges and universities have created teaching and learning centers. If you have one at your institution, use it!**

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Chapter 9:

Focusing on Diversity and Inclusion

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When it comes to diversity and inclusion, it's important to start by articulating just what we mean by those terms. A good definition of 'diversity' is employed by Sanger (2020) in her writing about diversity and inclusion in Asian higher education.

She notes that diversity means "variety and range, a significant degree of variation within a particular group or community across a range of characteristics" (p. 1).

Closely related to the word 'diversity' is the word 'difference,' which can be defined as a characteristic of identity, such as gender, race or age (Allen, 2011, p. 4).

As communication scholar Brenda Allen (2011, p. 183) explains in her book, *Difference Matters*, sociohistorical developments show that humans perceive and treat one another differently, depending on the social identity categories they may be assessed to embody. Those **social identities include gender, race, class, ability, language, sexuality, and age**. In the context of journalism, social identities – ascribed, adopted, or hybrid – can serve as places and spaces for possible stories. But, once we identify these identities, what we do with them relates to our second key word, **'inclusion.'**

This is simply the practice of making sure those from different identities are a central part of our thought process and are actively engaged in and a part of the activity or action that is being taken.

In the journalism classroom, the activity or action being taken is learning about the profession of news gathering and reporting. Journalism instructors, including those teaching online, have a two-fold responsibility around diversity and inclusion: Instructors must make sure that within the classroom students of all identities are able to be actively engaged in learning and that students learn how to practice that inclusion outside the classroom as journalists. That second responsibility has many facets. Instructors must help students learn to talk about topics that are sometimes difficult, produce news that is inclusive, document diversity, and evaluate professional news production for how well it takes into account diversity and inclusion.

Instructors must make sure that within the classroom students of all identities are able to be actively engaged in learning and that students learn how to practice that inclusion outside the classroom as journalists

This chapter will address these topics with tips and strategies from not only the author, who is based in the U.S., but also journalism educators in other regions of the world.

⇒ Supporting diversity in the virtual classroom

Before instructors can begin discussions about diversity, they must ensure that students of a variety of identities feel comfortable in the classroom. Doing this takes particular forms for courses taught online.

For example, after the COVID-19 pandemic prompted Naila Hamdy to move her face-to-face courses at The American University in Cairo, Egypt, online, she found that students were much more engaged in discussions. But she had to take into account one difference for her mostly women students, some of whom **wear veils in public**. She accommodated their desire to avoid being on camera during Zoom meetings. To facilitate online interaction during the sessions, she asked students to display photos of themselves when they had the video feature turned off.

Acknowledging that diversity is different in Egypt than in other parts of the world, Hamdy says journalism educators also have to take into account financial differences and differences of ability and disability when engaging with students in an online environment. This might account for students who do not have high-speed Internet access or are unable to afford the **costly textbook** that might be adopted for the online diversity class. Sensitivity to differences in socioeconomic status go beyond affordability issues to awareness of biases students or faculty from more affluent backgrounds might bring to the online learning experience. Additionally, running your online course materials through an **accessibility checker** will increase the chances that students with learning disabilities do not encounter barriers to their learning in your course. These accessibility checkers scan files for things such as **choice of colors, tags and alternative text**. Differences in physical ability require faculty to be more flexible in expectations for performing tasks that may require sitting for long periods of time or using a certain device to complete assignments.

⇒ Discussing diversity

Once instructors have established a space that allows all students to engage, they must help students practice talking about diversity and inclusion sensitively and productively. It's important to have a way to first **"break the ice"** to get students in a position to tackle deeper, more complex and controversial issues. Sometimes, though, even an icebreaker can lead to dialogue you did not expect.

For example, Irene Maweu, an online facilitator for e/Merge Africa Network, asks students to respond to the question, "If you were an animal, what animal would you be?" (Maweu, n.d.). In a video-conferencing environment,

think twice about the implications of our teaching examples, especially as we try our best to avoid stereotyping.

this gives each participant a chance to respond to a low-stakes question. But, as Maweu learned in one of her online sessions that support learners in multiple countries on the continent of Africa, the men in her class refused to answer the question. They were taken aback by the idea that they would consider animals' characteristics to describe their personalities. Maweu had to quickly modify her prompt to say, "If you were a car, what kind of car would you be?" In reflecting on the teaching experience, Maweu considered gender diversity in the way students responded to a question. But, using "car" may have been alienating to other students, perhaps those who don't drive. As instructors, we always have to think twice about the implications of our teaching examples, especially as we try our best to avoid stereotyping.

In discussing diversity, instructors should **embrace the value of personal experience** as a component of teaching. One way to do that is to draw on the Fault Lines Framework, developed by Robert Maynard, the first African American to own a major metropolitan newspaper (*The Oakland Tribune*).

The framework maintains that each person sees the world through "the fault lines of race, class, gender, generation and geography and that these forces shape lives, experiences and social tensions" (Kanigel 2019, p. 15).

Instructors might prepare journalism students for discussions of controversial issues related to diversity and inclusion by having them first reflect on their own identities and experiences, which might make clear potential gaps in their understanding of others' perspectives.

Discussions of key diversity and inclusion issues, such as "Why and How Journalists Cover International Day of Prayer" and the "Significance of the Martin Luther King, Jr. Holiday," might take place on a discussion board in an asynchronous learning environment or in a Zoom room in a synchronous course. The doorways one wants to open start with **stimulus material: a discussion prompt, an impactful piece of video or a reading**. While it's important to ensure the discussion prompt is clear and easily answered based on the instruction provided, it is also essential that the video or reading make a "splash" by offering students some potentially controversial ideas to debate and unpack with other students.

⇒ Delivering diversity

When moving from talking or discussing diversity to actually doing journalistic work that takes the element of various social identities into account, the impact of the instruction is on display. In news reporting courses, whether face-to-face or online, I require students to read the section of the ***Associated Press Stylebook***, a guidebook to writing and editing widely used by U.S. media organizations, on race and racism that debuted

in the 2019 edition (Froke et al., 2022). The section starts with a strong caution that **reporting and writing about issues involving race calls for thoughtful consideration, precise language and an openness to discussion with others of diverse backgrounds**. The entry then addresses the **doctrine of racism**, under what circumstances a **statement, action or policy should be termed “racist”**, and definitions of various racial and ethnic groups. The 2022-2024 edition also has a new 8-page section dedicated to **inclusive storytelling**. To evaluate understanding of the reading, I ask about information from this section on an exam. Still, the actual delivery of diversity education often does not manifest until students have to apply the stylebook guidance in real reporting assignments.

In online courses in which students produce journalistic content, educators should stress to students the importance of getting beyond the usual sources and acknowledging the diversity within diverse groups, which Rachel Kanigel points out in her **Diversity Style Guide**. This allows students to have better stories that reflect a wider range of lived experiences. They also will find more stories as they acknowledge their own limited experiences and step across their “fault lines,” discovering new sources, perspectives, and newsworthy topics and events.

Helping our students know terminologies related to gender and the importance of **gender-neutral language** is also a role we play as educators. In addition to the *Associated Press Stylebook* that devotes multiple pages to the topic with a separate entry on gender-neutral language, **UNESCO has published its Gender-sensitive indicators for media**, an open-access online resource available through its digital library.

⇒ Documenting and evaluating diversity

In addition to discussing diversity-related topics and producing news content that reflects both diversity and inclusion, students in online journalism courses may tackle the increasingly important tasks of **documenting and evaluating diversity**.

For example in data journalism courses, students may need to sort, divide or disaggregate data to uncover potential news stories about whether a program or initiative reflects gender, race or even class diversity. For example, dozens of Black-owned newspapers in the United States ran front-page stories in 2021 documenting the population shifts of Black residents in their communities based on data from the 2020 U.S. Census. In an online data journalism course, students could use government datasets to analyze how such population shifts might affect future voting patterns.

Instructors could also challenge students studying journalism or mass communication, especially at the graduate level, to use multiple research methods to analyze the presence or absence of racial, ethnic or gender diversity in news content and how well journalists fulfill their **ethical duty to report on the evils of racism, discrimination, and xenophobia**. Documenting diversity in local television newsrooms, for example, might mean designing an academic study of who is producing news content or reviewing a series of research articles that engaged readers on this topic.

Such analysis might also examine the type of “**citizen journalism**” by African Americans filming and tweeting evidence of fatal police encounters (Richardson, 2020) that produced the 2020 video from the United States of Police Officer Derek Chauvin kneeling on George Floyd’s neck. The video, shot by 17-year-old Darnella Frazier on her phone and posted to Facebook, traveled from a Minneapolis, Minnesota, street corner to every corner of the world, sparking solidarity protests in more than fifty nations, from Germany to Thailand, Argentina to Turkey (Haynes, 2020, p. 9). Frazier was recognized for her character and courage with a 2021 Pulitzer Prize.

Special Citation. The Pulitzer Board, which awards the top prizes for U.S. print and digital journalism, said her work exemplified “the crucial role of citizens in journalists’ quest for truth and justice” (The Pulitzer Prizes, n.d.).



Conclusion

Promoting diversity and inclusion in online spaces requires instructors to be intentional about strategies for breaking the ice in discussing diversity, accommodating differences among students when requiring engagement in online spaces and taking advantage of student experiences when designing assignments. Tools such as the *Associated Press Stylebook*’s section on race and racism and the Fault Lines Framework can equip students to consider diversity and inclusion in newswriting and reporting assignments. These tips can enable instructors to be **sensitive to diversity and intentional about inclusivity**, whether leading journalism online courses at the undergraduate or graduate level.



Takeaways

- ▶ **Diversity is the variation across characteristics within a particular group. Inclusion is the practice of making sure those from different social identities are actively engaged in the activity or action being taken.**
- ▶ **A memorable experience discussing diversity starts with selecting the right stimulus material – a discussion prompt, an impactful piece of video or a reading – and concludes with a clear direction on how students will be evaluated for their role in the discussion.**
- ▶ **Beyond discussion of diversity-related topics or delivery of news content that reflects both diversity and inclusion, students in online courses may tackle the increasingly important task of documenting diversity using the plethora of datasets available online or evaluating.**

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Chapter 10:

Collaborative Learning Experience in Online Spaces

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Unlike education in other social science subjects, journalism education emphasizes integrating students' theoretical learning with skill development through practice. Teamwork and collaborative projects in courses play a pivotal role in helping students acquire essential journalism skills. However, online education has made it even more complicated than traditional classroom learning for students to do collaborative work. To address these challenges, journalism instructors teaching online should organize courses carefully, design group assignments and collaborative projects that fit online collaboration, adopt mixed methods to encourage students' cross-cultural communication in groups, provide detailed feedback on assignments and offer students databases, collaborative platforms and other supplementary digital learning tools.

Collaborative learning is a teaching strategy of organizing students to learn in small groups, as well as a strategy for students to do **self-directed learning** in teams. This approach to learning,

which requires students to prepare individually and engage in teamwork, has broad application for journalism courses delivered online.

As a pedagogical approach, collaborative learning offers a “flipped” experience, changing the habit of learning alone by establishing learning partnerships among students. It stresses the interdependence between peers or people with similar learning objectives to facilitate learning through inner-group communication and achieve better learning outcomes for each learning partner. The idea is that learners gain knowledge as much from the process of collaborating as from studying course materials independently (Thomas, 2002).

For students majoring in journalism, collaborative learning can also help expand knowledge of how media interact with society, how culture and customs work, etc., by deep communication with learning partners around the world. The diverse identities of group members can also enhance their cross-cultural communication abilities.

It is worth mentioning that collaborative learning is differentiated from cooperative learning, although both require a group component. Cooperative learning is a process that leads to an assembled product in which team members split the workload, promoting higher achievement and positive attitudes (Johnson et al., 2014), while collaborative learning tends to combine individual contributions with small group interactions to solve a larger problem (Falcione et al., 2019). Through learning activities, learners can engage in knowledge exchange and build learning communities.

⇒ Collaborative learning in journalism education in the digital age

Digital technology has transformed long-distance communication, enhancing human interaction. Nowadays, nearly every stage of collaborative learning, including motivation, information exchange, knowledge building and community development, happens online. Simultaneously, learners mobilize digital resources to complete course tasks, construct knowledge through interaction with partners, enhance cognition, and achieve the goal of solving problems.

In the digital age, **information and communication technologies (ICTs)**, on the one hand, make it possible for learners to create individual contributions at different times or in different places or work on a project separately from other team members working at the same time or in the same place. On the other hand, online teaching can manage collaborative learning through live streaming, a **learning management system (LMS)**, social network apps and other vertical or horizontal interactive tools to achieve positive teaching outcomes outside the physical classroom.

Collaborative learning can be achieved in both synchronous and asynchronous online courses, though the two online teaching modes work for courses with different goals and scenarios. Synchronous learning tends to be lecture-oriented, although it still entails students’ exposure to unfamiliar concepts within their realm of understanding (Barkley, Cross and Major, 2014). This kind of course also constructs a “pseudo environment,” in which the real-time interaction between instructor and students most closely resembles offline teaching. As an active way of learning, synchronous learning can provide more flexible collaborative opportunities and also help instructors organize their classes.

Asynchronous courses are usually taught on learning management platforms such as Canvas, Moodle, or Blackboard and are characterized by teacher-recorded materials and students learning independently. In asynchronous courses, teachers and learners are **separated in time and space**, and most of the guidance and interaction happen through the LMS in the form of text posts, though some instructors employ multimedia tools. A few collaborative learning activities can also happen in asynchronous courses, via offline discussion and guidance. One of those is peer review of assignments, which allows each student to get feedback from two to three partners and use it to improve journalistic work. Peer review, a valuable method in collaborative learning, can produce long-term benefits, including developing autonomous learning skills and improving reflective and critical thinking ability.

⇒ Collaborative learning and real-world problems

According to Fischer (2011), groups work better than individuals when dealing with challenging tasks or subjects. Collaborative learning can be especially useful when students are investigating social problems.

Problem-based learning (PBL) is a possible direction for collaborative learning. Based on real-world problems, PBL is a student-centered method that inspires learners to study actively by themselves through interpretation, presentation, discussion and mutual communication. PBL emphasizes solving problems through cooperation between learners in complex, meaningful and real situations, exploring the knowledge behind problems and helping learners build a stimulating academic research environment. The problem-based method can also guide learners to give full play to their own background knowledge and cooperation ability. By conducting higher cognitive activities, such as sharing and negotiating, the team can solve a problem, and in the process gain knowledge and skills.

Take teaching of “Gatekeeping Theory” for example. Professors can provide students five news clues and pose a question such as, “If you were a journalist, which one would you choose to pursue and why?” Then an advanced question could be, “If you came from different news organization – such as CNN, BBC or CGTN – would you make the same choice?”

Those questions, which we also call ‘problems’, can inspire the students to think about how gatekeeping happens and reflect on the considerations that affect gatekeeper practice.

⇒ Making collaborative learning a success

Several factors help ensure successful collaborative learning:

1. Rigorous organization of the course: The teacher should design group assignments or projects suitable for remote collaboration. The effectiveness of collaborative learning depends on well-designed learning projects, and such learning projects must come from structured and scientific curriculum design. For example, the discussion of group assignments and projects can help students reflect on their behaviors in teamwork and inspire them to think about their future research directions.

2. Reasonable grouping strategies: A strong group relationship is the guarantee of the completion of tasks. **Random grouping works better than student grouping freely**, because it can balance the opportunities and individual capacities in teams rather than learners choosing partners by personal disposition.

3. Effective teaching guidance: Interaction in collaborative situations is more often group-related than task-related (Vuopala, Hyvönen and Järvelä, 2015). Collaborative learning is a form of organizational communication, in which the role of opinion leaders should not be underestimated. The teacher can ask a **teaching assistant to play an auxiliary role** in student teams or appoint group leaders to help guide group discussions and project implementation.

4. Clear division of labor within the team: A method like a literature circle, a strategy for organizing reading activities in classroom settings, can be adopted to help students find their position in the team and understand their role, especially in the reading projects. **Literature circles** are often used when teachers provide a list of recommended books for students to choose from and read. Four to eight students who choose the same book are placed in the same circle by the instructor or join the circle on their own. The various roles needed to develop and understanding of the book – such as summarizer, illustrator, connector, etc. – are either assigned by the instructor or chosen by the students. This activity, however, is guided by students in the group, and collaboration is one of the key aspects.

5. An effective motivation system: Clear evaluation standards are important to reflect fairness. They play a crucial role in encouraging students to participate in course discussions and homework.

6. Feedback on assignments: After the completion of collaborative learning tasks, teachers should provide feedback to students in a timely manner. Instructors need to respond to learners on the questions and guide them to consciously reflect on the process of problem solving and evaluate the results.

7. A checklist of materials: Although students probably can find materials on the internet, a clear roadmap for locating suggested readings and supplemental information is still necessary. Instructors should provide recommendations for collaborative work platforms, typical cases of news gathering and writing, references to digital devices and other preparation.



Conclusion

To sum up, collaborative learning is a valuable approach to improving the quality of online teaching, though it must be employed in ways that achieve the purpose of the curriculum. However, despite numerous studies on social interaction in collaborative learning, little is known about how to successfully cultivate collaborative learning environments. The academic environment for collaborative learning should, however, be taken into account.

In journalism education, considering current events or other topics closer to **real-life experiences may help learners get engaged with empathy**. In addition, various forms such as competitive activities, cooperation, games, debates and presentations are considered key elements in the construction of the academic environment.

Instructors can also organize offline activities – such as seminars, one-on-one guidance sessions, and regular online and offline office hours – to help learners solve course problems and tackle difficulties encountered in the course. An appropriate environment and scene for collaborative learning provide a new thinking direction that future online journalism courses can explore.



Takeaways

- ▶ **Online cooperative learning requires teachers understand the technical possibilities of the network platform and guide students to learn cooperatively and independently by telecommuting.**
- ▶ **Creative strategies, such as problem-based learning and literature circles, can help students gain new knowledge and skills.**
- ▶ **For journalism education, collaborative learning can be a useful tool for training students to use practical skills or conduct practices such as social inquiry. Collaborative learning can also work well in online global exchanges with students from other parts of the world.**

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Part III:

Challenges in online teaching



Chapter 11:

Teaching reporting- and writing-intensive courses online

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Teaching reporting and writing-intensive courses is at the heart of the journalism education enterprise, and journalism classrooms typically mimic the to-and-fro of traditional newsrooms, with an emphasis on revision and rewrites and with feedback conveyed orally and in-person. This process has served journalism education well for the past 50 years, as educators socialized new and student journalists in the ways of the newsroom.

However, with online learning becoming more accessible, instructors now need to adjust their teaching practice to better reflect newer norms and routines. Efforts to do so typically reveal multiple contradictions and issues as we try to [migrate in-person pedagogy to an online environment](#). Activities that we are used to doing – and used to doing well – pose intense challenges as we belatedly realized that much of what we do depends on an in-person experience that is difficult to replicate via the web.

Some of these challenges are rooted in the same questions that first arose in the earlier years of online news as journalists simply copied and pasted stories from the newspaper onto the web. The resulting content quickly became known as “shovelware” and was generally considered sloppy and inferior to the newspaper product. The copy/paste practices failed precisely because the journalists had no experience in presenting content to an online audience and merely replicated their offline practices in an environment that was ill-suited to it.

While shovelware has since disappeared from newsrooms, educators now face similar challenges in designing course content for audiences that are already primed to expect a very different type of content from their existing online experiences. So, for example, the content of a face-to-face course cannot be simply copied and pasted into a learning management system (LMS) with an expectation that students will direct themselves through the Word docs or, worse, PowerPoint slides. Additionally, instructors need to consider how to best *engage* with their student audience, which equally mirrors challenges faced in newsrooms also learning how to navigate a changed relationship with their online audience.

For example, most of us create classrooms that look like traditional newsrooms, with the professor or lecturer playing the role of editor, the students in the role of reporters/writers, and the student feedback provided face-to-face.

This style has to be adjusted for online classes as we simply can't be there in-person.

In addition to thinking about course design and engagement, where we must adapt the content to suit the medium – rather than wait for the medium to adapt to us – there are multiple technical and cultural barriers to consider around the student experience, ranging from challenges with internet connectivity to software proficiency, to the *sheer loneliness of working in a remote or distanced location*. However, while vastly different to the in-person experience, these online learning conditions are a good preparation for the kind of reporting and writing experiences that are increasingly common in journalism: a reporter working alone in the field or from a home “office,” rather than in the sort of bustling newsroom that was more common 20 or even 10 years ago.

Thus, this chapter advises instructors to avoid the mistakes of the earlier internet-enabled newsrooms and instead play to the strengths – and weaknesses – of the online environment; to not merely shovel the syllabus of a face-to-face writing or reporting class online and expect the result to work; and to chart a new course in engaging their online audience.

The main challenges in this area can be found in three aspects of courses:

- Course navigation: content and design
- Assignments: process and product
- Engagement: feedback and grading

This chapter, then, is an attempt to provide a framework of best practices to help instructors plan for, and succeed in, teaching writing-intensive courses online. The chapter addresses many of the main issues and challenges that educators will face as they help their students excel in both synchronous and asynchronous classes.



Course navigation

Beta test everything. Reverse-design your course content.

In-person instructors have traditionally overlooked the LMS, regarding it as a place to post the syllabus and a destination for submitted assignments rather than as a genuine complement to instruction. As the first point of contact with students, the LMS assumes a *lot* more importance in an online course. It plays a key role in setting user expectations and should be treated thus. For example, use the LMS to set a **“learning” mood** and consider starting each week’s synchronous online session with a 5-minute “share your news and/or pets on screen” to set a friendly tone. Or, if the course is asynchronous, post a **short video or audio file explaining the week’s learning objectives**. Make the navigation consistent throughout. Think of your syllabus as a mini-site and build out your LMS to reflect the syllabus. Answer as many questions as you can in advance. Beta test everything. Reverse-design your course content; *start* the syllabus with this information:

- What is the final assessment for this course?
- What activities will prepare students for this assessment?
- What skills and content will students need to know to participate in these activities?

Overall, it’s time to learn to love your LMS! Use the announcements section of your LMS to send out emails, as this also serves as a reference archive that can become quite a time-saver as the semester progresses. Set times and dates for weekly emails so students learn to expect these updates at certain times. **Be predictable and consistent with what you send and when.**

While we spend a lot of time designing our content, we generally design it for desktop screens, while much of our student audience will access that content via mobile screens. Again, these are issues that bedeviled newsrooms at the start of the internet era, and we can learn a lot from their shovelware errors. For example, many newsrooms now use larger fonts in documents that are designed to be viewed on-screen. Educators should strive to **preview every element on a mobile screen to create a better user experience.**



Assignments: process

Most of our assignments are based on in-person interviews with human and data sources, but instructors need to rethink this approach for the online environment. We need to think about the process as well as the resulting product. For example, students may not be able to look at physical copies of records, which can sometimes complicate access to official documents. **Build out assignments that rely on computer-assisted reporting rather than shoe leather.** You can also:

- Bring sources into the classroom via teleconference.
- Require students to learn how to **search social and digital sources**.
- Require students to make **phone calls to sources**. This might seem like a very simple assignment, but is more nuanced as many students struggle with this form of communication. Emails are the default for many new and student journalists, and it is too easy for a source to ignore an email.
- Require students to use their social media accounts for more professional purposes in ways that complement the coursework.

⇒ **Assignments: product**

Students may be challenged by the particular writing conventions of journalism: inverted pyramid, shorter sentences, avoidance of first person, broadcast writing. Make sure to **make up for the lack of non-verbal cues with detailed and clear instructions on everything**, and do try and anticipate every question in these instructions. Also, share as many examples as practical of student work that earned high marks, as well as examples of work that met the basic requirements so students can compare the two standards when creating their own work.

⇒ **Engagement: feedback and grading**

Conversations with students play an essential role in creating the kind of space where students want to participate, and while it's easy to identify the shyer students in an in-person class, it's hard to do that in both live video-conferencing or asynchronous courses. That desire to participate is key to creating the kinds of conditions where students can excel, and instructors would be advised to look outside their LMS to help encourage all students to contribute to class discussions. Conversations on an LMS can be dry at the best of times, and instructors would be advised to *not* rely on the LMS discussion board for these purposes. These are generally poorly designed interfaces, and students will typically only contribute when required to do so for a grade. There are, however, two options that work well individually or in concert:

- *Provide anonymous AMAs (Ask Me Anything):* Platforms like Padlet can be integrated into the LMS, providing the ability for students to ask **questions anonymously** that can instill a sense of confidence in those who might be concerned about revealing themselves in front of their peers.
- *Meet students where they are:* Create **channels in their most-used SMS app** (e.g., WhatsApp, Slack or even Facebook groups) to host conversations. Once you have set up the channel, step back and watch students who are already used to using these products communicate more freely with each other.

Feedback, an essential part of writing courses, is time-consuming in an online environment, particularly if several students are making similar errors in their writing. In addition, students often struggle to understand an instructor's comments because students are not regular consumers of the media they are learning to report and write for.

Clear rubrics, template comments, and audio notes are some ways to provide feedback, as are workshop sessions where the most common errors are highlighted (anonymously) and edited on screen, as explained below.

Another solution is to create a single email for the entire class that includes comments on the consistent themes among mistakes and examples on how to fix them. If class sessions are synchronous, the instructor can also set up workshop feedback sessions via teleconference and work with one student at a time while the others wait in line. The online workshop mirrors an offline version, and all participants can see the edits taking place on screen. Of course, this process does require connectivity, but potential bandwidth issues can be reduced by removing any requirements for student camera presence, as the main visual is the work taking place on the screen.

The most prominent strategies in writing feedback are the **editor-product/coach-process** approaches (Kenyon, 2017), and while both are important, the coaching strategy is more useful for online classes. It allows more

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scope for revision and rewriting, with the instructor advising the student *how* to revise or rework the writing, rather than editing the product. Accordingly, faculty can schedule one-on-one sessions with students, and each student can work through writing with the instructor online. This method can free up time for the professor, as the revision/grading can be done in tandem with the student. Martinez and Olsen (2015) found that students responded well to such online conferencing, as they liked the convenience and time-saving aspects as well as being able to make changes on screen.

If none of these strategies work for you, experiment with an app such as **Otter** to transcribe your comments as you review the student's work. Then edit the resulting text into a feedback document and send the audio file out to the student. Again, the transcriptions can also be collated to create an overall feedback document that groups similar writing issues into themes, with appropriate corrections, to be emailed to the whole class.

To make grading go faster, template as much as you can. Is everyone making the same writing mistakes? Write one general response and copy and paste it, with necessary modifications, into student work. Provide rubrics for everything.

Use self-review, with a rubric containing elements such as: Is the most important idea in the first graph? Have I explained the who, what, where, when, how and why? Is there a nut graph?

Discuss the *process* of revision as well as the product. Require students to rewrite every graded assignment, but also make sure to incorporate grading practices into these revisions in such a way that you are not swamped with multiple grading assignments. Some universities allow up to 50 percent of the final grade for rewrites. Consider having some ungraded assignments, such as short reflections on readings to be emailed close to the deadline. They give students a quick opportunity to explain what they do and don't understand, which can help you fine-tune your teaching efforts.



Conclusion

Keep it simple. Make sure the course navigation is easy to follow. Try and anticipate every possible student question in the course content and design and provide an anonymous Q&A forum for the questions you didn't anticipate. [Adapt your assignments to the tech](#). Don't copy and paste your course content onto the web. Use transcription apps to help save time. Breathe!



Takeaways

- ▶ Use the move to online teaching as a time to really overhaul your course content and optimize it for mobile. Preview everything you do on your mobile phone screen. Use large text (think 15-point rather than 12) and use cross-heads to break up chunks of grey.
- ▶ Provide anonymous spaces for students to ask questions. Prompt questions at regular intervals.
- ▶ Use an app such as Otter to record audio and transcribe your own notes to save time.

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Chapter 12:

Teaching audio production and podcasting online

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Podcasts are the shiny new objects in the room, and everyone wants to produce one. And it seems as if more and more people are doing just that; the genre has grown exponentially. More than 50 percent of Americans over the age of twelve say that they've listened to a podcast (Webster, 2021).

50%+

Americans over 12 state they've listened to a podcast (Webster, 2021).

The growth in podcasting was already ascending prior to the coronavirus pandemic, but the pandemic forced the world into a dependence on remote activities and productivity for all sectors, including education. Though the sudden shift to emergency remote teaching was challenging for everyone, the transition eventually smoothed out and some media educators, including the author of this chapter (Wake, Fox and Strong, 2020), adapted to teaching skills-based courses in a seamless manner.

This chapter will focus not only on designing your online audio production course with a [Project-Based Learning \(PBL\) approach](#), but also on *producing* audio and podcasting content online. The full audio production scheme, from conception to completion, will be outlined. This multistep process will highlight the ideation, the pitch phase, the production process – including the many ways that you can make a podcast – and finally, the promotion and

distribution aspect of producing audio and podcast content. Additionally, this chapter will take into account the realities of the digital divide as well as other technological global disparities. Still, podcasting, like its close cousin, radio, remains the ideal platform for enabling anyone who has an audio idea to have their voice heard.

⇒ Determine the design of your course

To be equipped to teach audio production online takes some preparation, not unlike teaching face-to-face, so let's start with the design of your course. It could be a fifteen-week semester or just a three-week workshop, but some specifications should be addressed in the design of your course as well as keeping in mind your course learning objectives and outcomes. That brings us to the project-based learning portion of your course design: determining the kinds of projects that students will complete as they build on their audio production skills, which includes the final audio output for the course. Will students be expected to produce a news podcast, an audio feature, an interview, an audio drama or some other variation of audio content? PBL "focuses on providing students with opportunities to identify and tackle complex, multifaceted problems in both small groups and on their own" (Slavich and Zimbardo, 2012).

Within this perspective, one pedagogical approach for an online course would be to consider the **flipped classroom approach** (Bali, 2014). Students could watch videos, such as audio editing tutorials, listen to podcasts and/or review assigned reading materials outside of class time, while class time would be left for active learning. This asynchronous modality provides flexibility, especially in the event that internet access isn't dependable, because you could create low-stakes quizzes to complement the video. You could also invite students to respond to the videos with audio reflections. Either of these methods allows the students to actively apply their new knowledge. Speaking of the internet, it would be best to **survey your students**, either in advance of the start of the course or in the first class session, about their internet capabilities in addition to their access to audio editing software.

⇒ Incorporate Project-Based Learning

Project-based learning is rooted in the scaffolding teaching philosophy, which works well for both online teaching and teaching audio production; no one gets left behind because you begin with the basics and build on students' knowledge base. You will begin with an introductory assignment or project that requires the students to listen to audio. It could be listening only or listening, recording *and* reflecting. For example, **asking students to create a soundscape is an active listening assignment and one that can be produced using a mobile device**. Most mobile devices have a voice memos function that is perfect for recording audio in the field.

Additional assignments will progress in difficulty to increase students' learning and lead to the final output for the course. Projects should also be a combination of individual as well as small-group assignments. The inclusion of small-group projects will allow students to share their self-taught knowledge and techniques with their classmates. Facilitating online activities for the small groups via the breakout rooms in Zoom, or an equivalent video-conferencing platform, generates engagement for the course community. For instance, the instructor could provide some talking points for students to discuss and deconstruct their soundscape listening

project. The **National Geographic Society Soundscapes Activity (2010)** has a short list of prompts including: is there a sound that makes you think of your home?

⇒ Take advantage of third-party materials

Making time for audio editing tips and tutorials is vital for an online audio production course. A vast archive of tutorials is available on YouTube, Vimeo and other platforms. These videos cover most of the popular audio editing platforms, such as **Audacity**, which faced controversy in 2021 for its updated privacy policy (Kleinman, 2021), **Adobe Audition** (Walker, 2021), **Hindenburg**, and many others as well as **Open Educational Resources** (OER) (UNESCO, 2017). This is where the flipped classroom approach comes in handy. Students should watch these videos outside of class, but you should also pair the viewing with an audio editing exercise and ideally one where you provide the audio files. You could then use part of a class session as a listening session to play back students' completed audio editing exercises while offering compliments on what went well, along with tips for how to improve. Students can also share their experience of completing this exercise.

For every project in your course, you should have appropriate reading material, along with at least one exemplar. Projects should also include a rubric so that students know not only the expectations for assessment, but also the end result they are striving to achieve.

⇒ Scaffold the final projects

In the design of your online audio production course, consider **scaffolding the final project**, an approach that has proved useful in ensuring that students are on the right track. For example, if the final course output is a five- to seven-minute narrative nonfiction audio feature, producing the project will take some time and should be divided into sections. Each section should incorporate various levels of feedback. In particular, once students pitch their ideas for their audio feature or podcast, there should be feedback from their peers as well as from the instructor. Another opportunity to provide feedback is at the draft script phase, where you can share guidance for providing feedback and ask students to critique each other's work in small groups.

This step is useful to improve their listening and critiquing skills in a professional manner. The point is breaking up a big project into smaller chunks so high-stakes assignments are less overwhelming for students in the online environment.

⇒ Recording audio content online

Obtaining optimal audio quality should be the goal for producing audio. Though there might be challenges with recording audio remotely, in general, this approach is acceptable when producing audio content. Remote interviews can be conducted using a video conferencing platform such as **Zoom or Microsoft Teams**, and asynchronous interviews can be executed using a messaging app platform such as **WhatsApp**. Of course, students can use their mobile devices to conduct face-to-face interviews using the device's native voice memos app (as suggested for the soundscape project) or using a free mobile app such as **Voice Record Pro**.

⇒ The four phases of audio content creation

The final project for your online course can be organized to emulate the real-world audio production process to include: ideation, the pitch phase, the production phase, as well as, both the distribution and production phases.

The **ideation phase** is a chance for students to brainstorm ideas for their final audio projects. Consider utilizing an activity for them to work in small groups in breakout rooms to share their ideas.

Part of the **pitch phase** should be completed outside of class, using a flipped classroom approach. Students work on the research for their audio project, which could include providing a rationale for why an audio project or podcast on this topic is important to audiences, identifying potential interviewees, and considering audio opportunities that would enhance the audio project, such as the use of natural sound or archival audio. The second part of the pitch phase could involve a brief online presentation to the class, like an elevator pitch, to highlight the main purpose of the audio project or podcast. The presenter's classmates would then offer comments and suggestions for additional angles for the proposed project and/or possible interviewees.

Once pitches are approved, students can move to the **production phase**, which must be scaffolded, no matter what the project is. If the assignment is a narrative nonfiction audio feature, you can break this up into segments such as interviewing, gathering natural sounds and archival audio, writing the script, narrating, editing and the final mixdown of the audio project. Providing feedback for each of these phases is a way to build community using your online teaching platform's breakout rooms.

The last phase of the audio production process, **distributing and promoting the audio project or podcast**, is heavily dependent on the online environment. When the audio projects are complete, you'll want to consider a publishing platform. There are numerous options for displaying your audio content publicly, both for free or at low cost (Winn, 2021). Most online audio platforms or podcast players will ask you to upload artwork to accompany your audio. You and your students can use many free resources, such as Canva, to create graphics to promote your audio.

There are several factors to consider when posting audio content online. One concern is **privacy**. Take time to have conversations with students about protecting their privacy and others'. Also, inquire about their comfort with the quality of the audio project before you upload it to the digital sphere. Another consideration when posting audio content online is to include a **Creative Commons (CC)** (When We Share, Everyone Wins, n.d.) license to protect your copyright and to possibly allow others to share your work with an attribution. You should also plan to make students' content accessible by including a **written transcript of the audio**. Online transcription services are plentiful, and a brief list from **wpbeginner** is a good place to start to find one (Editorial Staff, 2021). "Show notes" are an important addition to your audio content's online presence. Show notes are a description of the podcast, including credits. One reason to have show notes is because they are a searchable (text) component of audio posted online.

Finally, in the promotional phase of audio production, you should utilize all viable marketing tools to get the word out about your audio project. You could create a campaign, including a **press release**, or perhaps adopt a more organic approach of having students share and promote class output on their personal social channels and messaging apps. A combination of the two will extend the reach of your promotion strategy. The graphic that was included in the distribution phase will be the star of the show, as the visual appeal will attract potential listeners. This is also the phase where you want to invite engagement with your audio content, by asking

listeners to share their thoughts on the audio stories or interviews that were produced for the course. A dedicated hashtag could also help people discover your podcast in the sea of podcasts.



Conclusion

The success of online audio production is achievable through course design, project-based learning, scaffolding, as well as the flipped classroom pedagogical approach. The primary considerations to keep in mind are who your students are and what resources they have available to them as well as what the final audio output for your course will be. Invariably, there will be challenges, but through **planning and scaffolding** (and of course a dose of patience), you can coach your students to produce audio projects that they can be proud of.



Takeaways

- ▶ **Podcasting is a digital audio product native to the online environment, so it lends itself well to online teaching.**
- ▶ **Through project management and course design using scaffolding, you can develop an online audio production course that is best suited for your students.**
- ▶ **Though there are many free resources for producing podcasts, having a budget for producers and editors, a podcast hosting platform and graphics will step up your game and set your podcast apart from the sea of other podcasts out there.**

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Chapter 13:

Teaching Television News Online

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Teaching television news online requires flexibility and adaptability – from both the instructor and students. It requires that the instructor and students learn and apply new skills. For students, these include technical skills, such as virtual interviewing, and recording video on smartphones, as well as marketable skills, such as teamwork, communication, and writing in a virtual setting removed from face-to-face, day-to-day interaction with others on the news team. For instructors, it means developing a new approach to teaching, such as [finding ways to critique work and deliver instruction virtually](#).

This chapter highlights an approach that the authors used during the height of the COVID-19 pandemic in a synchronous remote course called Television Reporting 1&2, in which students produced multiple newscasts. The chapter offers suggestions for teaching television news in planned synchronous online delivery, as well as in an asynchronous mode.

Before beginning the course, the instructor must engage in what Wiggins and McTighe (2005) term [“backward design,”](#) whereby the instructor begins with the desired outcomes and works backward to design assignments that help the students achieve those outcomes. The outcomes can be

both technical skills, such as editing or videography, and marketable skills, such as teamwork or communication. In a TV news course, the outcomes desired may be uniform for the entire class, such as “students will work as part of a team to produce three newscasts,” or more individual, such as “each student will apply knowledge gained in previous classes to create four news packages during the semester.”

⇒ Get to know your students

The most important initial step is to assess the capability of the students to operate in an online environment. One way of doing this is to **survey students** before the semester begins to find out what **types of internet connections** they have, whether they have access to **reliable computers for video editing**, and whether they have **smartphones** and, if so, what those **phones’ capabilities** are. The survey should also determine where students live and their availability at various times of the day to work on course assignments, their course load, and their preferred roles in the television newscast production. Depending on how well an instructor knows the students, some additional questions may be necessary to determine technical ability. Having all this information enables the instructor to develop realistic learning outcomes and devise a plan for achieving them.

In our case, one learning outcome was that students would produce four **hyperlocal television newscasts** during the semester, using news content they created. “Hyperlocal” means centered on a specific geographic area. For us, that meant that students would report on people, businesses, and institutions near where they lived. Our students are spread over a large metropolitan area, and forming them into teams based on location (postal codes) made it easier for them to create targeted hyperlocal content (Figure 1).



Figure 1. Student postal codes mapped using batchgeo.com and Google Maps.

⇒ Determine the scale of television production

Determining whether students will be producing individual news stories for publication or whether the class will be putting together television newscasts helps the instructor define desired course outcomes. If the goal is to produce television newscasts, then you must determine the scale of the production in terms of length, content, and number of newscasts or individual packages. Most of these decisions will depend on the number of students in your class. Producing a television newscast in asynchronous and synchronous environments is not very different if there are mechanisms in place for students to collaborate and share content. In addition to using cloud storage for uploading completed video work, using an instant messaging system helps the class stay connected. Apps such as **GroupMe, WhatsApp, or Signal** are free and may serve as a collaborative unofficial communication channel. One advantage offered by WhatsApp and Signal, for instance, is that they offer end-to-end encryption – a characteristic favored by journalists around the world – and they do not collect metadata to use for commercial purposes (Barrett, 2021; Molla, 2021). Whatever can be done to help students find new ways to collaborate will help them once they graduate, as TV news operations are increasingly finding new tools to help with [collaboration and content sharing](#) (Pallanich, 2021).

Related to determining the scale of the production is having a clear philosophy of your approach to teaching and learning.

We believe that students learn best by doing. Experiential, hands-on learning – along with informed reflection – should be at the core of how instructors teach television news. Second, we believe that all students should have the opportunity to experience the various roles that comprise a television newscast. Our program is willing to sacrifice newscast quality to provide each student with diverse production experiences. By taking on different roles, students may discover hidden talents.

For example, a student may hesitate to serve as a news producer because this position requires that students utilize leadership, teamwork, communication, writing and, of course, organizational skills to lead newscast production. Not every student excels in this role, and, for some, it is a tough experience. For others, however, it can be a life-changing opportunity. Many students have discovered their calling as news producers in our program and, within months, have graduated and begun their professional careers in production at television stations. Throughout the production process, the instructor must remind students that they are developing [marketable skills important to future employers and transferrable to new and emerging media technologies and platforms](#).

⇒ From face-to-face to an online environment

Moving a weekly television newscast from a face-to-face environment to an online synchronous one demands data collection. The survey given out before the beginning of the semester elicited information that facilitated [assignment allocation and scheduling](#). We divided the students into three teams based on their geographic location – east, central and west –

and created three teams: Alpha, Bravo and Charlie. Each team had a mix of experienced and less-experienced students, with a maximum of six students in each group. We created a rotation with a news producer, assignment desk editor, video editor, anchor(s), and reporters. Initially we decided that each team would create four hyperlocal television newscasts, though this was cut back to three as the semester progressed. Adaptability is key.

⇒ Create tutorials

Once an instructor has assessed the students' capabilities, it is important to give the students what they need to succeed and achieve the learning outcomes. Creating tutorial videos that students can access is essential in both synchronous and asynchronous courses. Videos enable the instructor to demonstrate techniques, concepts, and software so that students can learn skills needed to complete assignments. Students can also access the **tutorial videos on-demand**, so guidance is always available, even if the instructor is not physically there. From a purely pedagogical perspective, "adding videos to your course will nearly always be beneficial for student learning and will rarely have a negative effect" (Barbaro, 2021). These tutorial videos should cover as many topics as possible, such as how to submit assignments, how to conduct virtual interviews, and how to use a smartphone to capture good-quality video, so that they can serve as a resource for students at any point in the course.

In an asynchronous television news course, all tutorial videos should be created before the term begins and made available to students as soon as the course opens. Additional material can be added if needed. In a synchronous course, some of the instructions or examples can be delivered in an online class meeting. However, the class meeting should not be a substitute for the students watching the tutorial videos; it should be reserved for delivering more impactful content, such as critiques of student work.

⇒ Provide consistent feedback

Determining how to provide feedback is also important when teaching television news online. In a face-to-face course the instructor can sit down with a student and go over work, answering questions immediately or demonstrating how to use software or equipment. In a synchronous course, regularly scheduled virtual meeting times still offer a chance to provide feedback and real-time critiques of the students' work, but the ability to watch as the students use equipment and provide feedback is diminished.

With an asynchronous course, the expectation is that the instructor has created a self-contained course and the students work at their own pace to achieve the goals of each week or course module. However, it is still very important for the instructor to remain engaged and provide feedback. Develop a system within a learning management system (LMS) such as Blackboard or Canvas or use an application such as Microsoft OneDrive where students can upload material, such as TV news reports, and the instructor can offer feedback in a timely manner. To remain accountable, let students know that they can expect feedback within a specified time period (Figure 2). To facilitate engagement with students in an asynchronous course, record the **feedback** and offer a **written summary** as well. If possible, engage in **voice-over narration** of students' work so that they can see and hear what you are talking about; using a screen recording will help you capture your feedback (Figure 3).

↑ > OneDrive - University of Texas at Arlington > Classes > BCMN 3350-4350 > 2021		
Name	Status	Date modified
1ST NEWSCAST 021721	✓ R	4/11/2021 4:41 PM
2ND NEWSCAST 031021	✓ R	3/22/2021 3:53 PM
3RD NEWSCAST 040721	✓ R	4/11/2021 4:41 PM
GRAPHIC LOWER THIRD	✓ R	2/10/2021 7:57 AM
PSAs	✓ R	2/10/2021 7:57 AM
UTA NEWS INTRO	✓ R	2/10/2021 7:57 AM

Figure 2. OneDrive (cloud storage) folders to organize productions and share content.

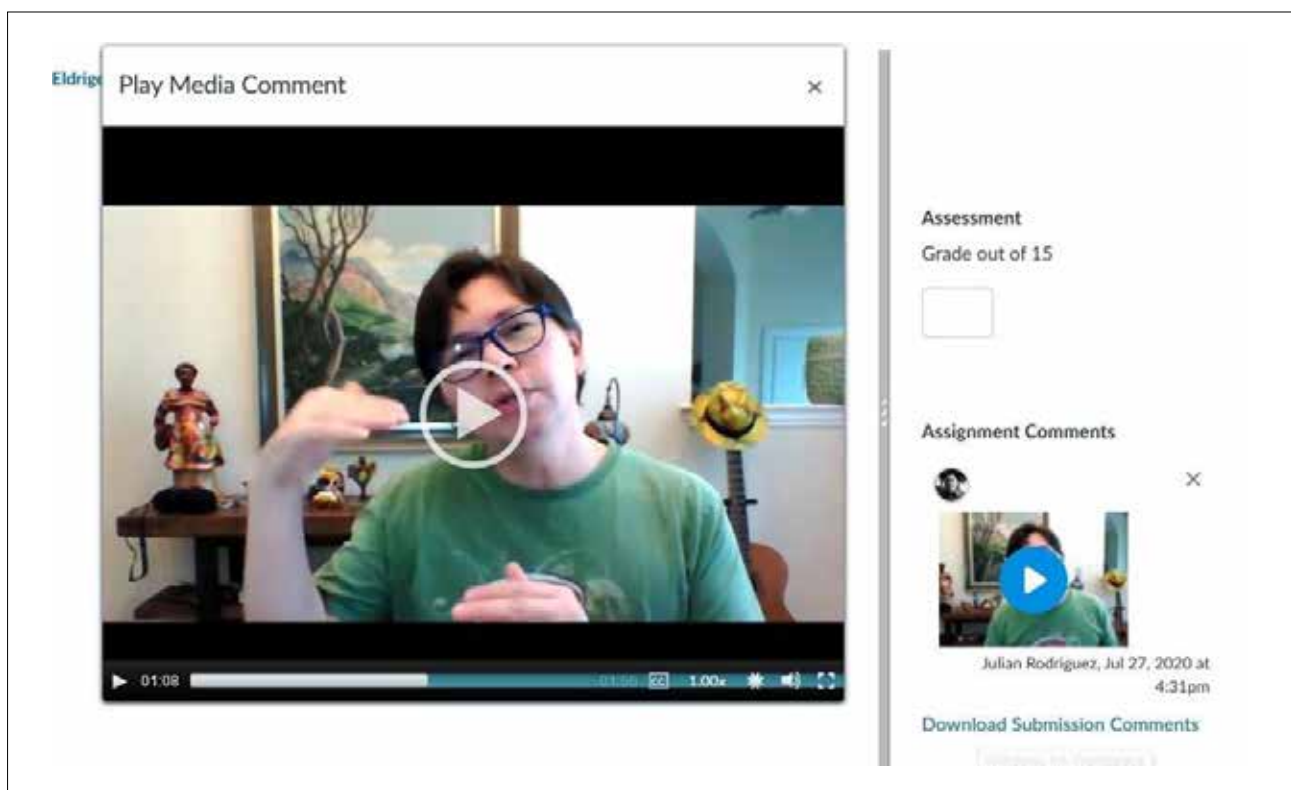


Figure 3. Julian Rodriguez, one of the authors of this chapter, provides video feedback to students using a learning management system (LMS).

In a synchronous course, it is possible to discuss the difficulties of carrying out virtual interviews, demonstrate audiovisual editing techniques, explain production schedules, and address other issues in real time (Figure 4). In an asynchronous course, however, an instructor may have to create additional tutorial videos and/or schedule separate meetings with individual students or groups of students to answer questions.

The most common topics that arise in a television news course include what software to use for each stage of the production process, how to interview subjects virtually and in person, what videography and video-editing techniques to use, and how to plan for contingencies, such as lack of internet connection or a lack of computer availability at home.

During the COVID-19 pandemic, how to follow World Health Organization (WHO) guidelines in various situations was also an issue. Creating tutorial videos to address such issues is time consuming, but the good news is that once the videos are created, they can be used in subsequent courses or as a resource that students can revisit during class.

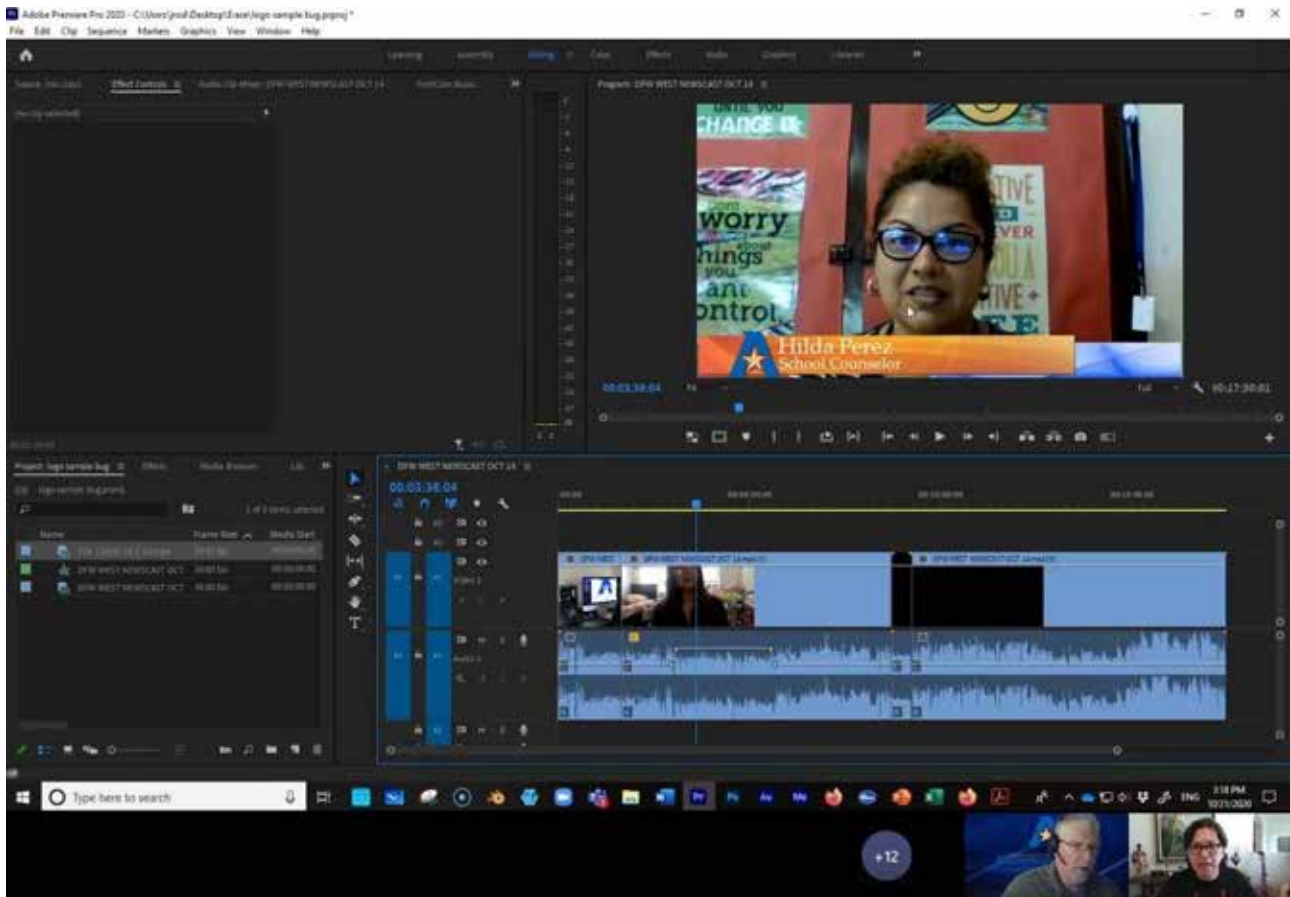


Figure 4. Faculty, at lower right, meet virtually with students (not pictured) to go over content and provide feedback.

⇒ From planning to production

We held virtual pitch meetings via Microsoft Teams during class in which we asked each student to pitch up to three story ideas. As instructors, we gave students feedback on each idea and pointed out possible production and legal issues arising from each story. Following our feedback, and class discussion, the best story idea was selected collectively by the instructor and the class. Students were expected to shoot, edit, and report their stories.

In an asynchronous course, a discussion board in the LMS could be used to pitch ideas and receive feedback. Students could be given a deadline for pitching ideas and expect to receive a response within a day or two.

We encouraged students to **submit their final video news reports via OneDrive**; we played back the stories during our Microsoft Teams meetings and provided students with detailed feedback. Due to time constraints, we were not able to critique every story. Instead, we either asked for volunteers, or we **selected stories with common issues, such as audio levels, video transitions**, etc., or stories with specific strong points that we

thought everyone in the class would learn from. A benefit to being online was the ability to **share computer screens and pull up Adobe Premiere Pro**, the non-linear editing system we use, and do real-time re-editing of stories. That allowed us to demonstrate editing techniques in a way that we had not been able to do when we were face-to-face because a lot of our class time was devoted to television studio production execution. Again, something similar could be done in an asynchronous environment; it would just necessitate the instructor creating a demonstration video of editing techniques and posting the video on the LMS for students to review on their own time.

Not all student work is strong, of course. **News reports lacking essential storytelling elements to stand alone were repurposed as voice-over (VO) stories or sound-on-tape (SOT)**. No story was left unused; we always found a way to repurpose the content that students created into a new story format.

Once the stories were completed and assigned in the newsroom computer system (NRCS), the news producer wrote transition statements and edited the intros and outros for each story. The anchors then recorded their parts, using their smartphones, and sent those recordings to the video editor in charge of putting together all the parts to make the complete television newscast. There was no set length for the newscast, as it depended on the number of stories received. Given the hyperlocal nature of the newscasts, reporters were encouraged to produce feature-like stories that were longer and more in-depth than traditional hard news reports.

One final thing we did was to bring in some **alumni of our program as guest speakers** to talk about their experiences in looking for work and working for a news station during the pandemic. This gave students hope that they, too, would be able to find jobs once they graduated. It also gave our students contacts within the industry whom they could look to for advice, networking opportunities, and encouragement.



Conclusion

We were forced into a potentially uncomfortable situation taking a class designed for studio production and moving it to a virtual space. However, we believe the lessons we learned have made us better instructors by helping us develop new approaches to our teaching consistent with solid teaching and learning practices and being willing to be more **flexible with new approaches to content creation and delivery**. Our students are better off for the experience because they developed new technical skills and further developed skills such as teamwork, communication, and critical thinking which are all traits that employer's value. We can report that a great number of students who went through this experience have jobs at TV stations as reporters, producers, and in production based in part on material created and skills acquired during the pandemic in an online environment.

Takeaways

- ▶ **Flexibility and adaptability are very important. Problems happen that can derail the best-laid plans, but what matters is how you react to, and solve, the problems. It is OK to experiment. Not everything we try is going to work.**
- ▶ **Teaching online does not mean lesser production values and lesser content. Some of the best stories that we have seen in recent years were produced with a smartphone during the pandemic. It reinforced the notion that content is king, and good content can be produced in many ways. Students learned to engage the community around them and to tell stories in compelling and creative ways.**
- ▶ **Whether synchronous or asynchronous, students must be taught that creating content in an online environment reflects today's production needs and is giving them new skills and opportunities that will help them succeed in their future careers. As instructors we learned that it is possible to teach broadcast journalism and specifically television news in an online setting.**

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For more on shooting video on your smartphone:

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Chapter 14:

Teaching Research Methods Online

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It is no secret that delivering courses online during the coronavirus pandemic came unexpectedly to the unprepared. The COVID-19 pandemic forced instructors to teach in a virtual setting, with variations among courses, faculty, universities and countries. Many components considered to be the basics of online teaching and learning in one context were difficult to achieve in another. Such was the case of online learning in Lebanon when the pandemic hit.

At the Lebanese American University, faculty had access to a variety of tools for effective online teaching. In fact, through establishing the Center for Innovative Learning, the university had been steadfastly preparing its faculty to include, at the very least, more digital tools in their teaching and, at best, deliver their courses fully online (Lebanese American University, n.d.). Although not all instructors made use of the available tools, those who were proficient in using e-learning systems found it easier to switch to online teaching.

Media research methods was one of many courses that had been making use of e-learning systems. The core requirement for both the communication and journalism Bachelor of Arts degrees is a senior-level course that introduces undergraduate students to the most common

scientific research methods, with heavy emphasis on empirical research and statistical tests. The primary objective of this core course is to instill a research mindset in students to allow them to use scientific research skills for a more accurate understanding of research publications, which leads to better data-driven reporting and information-seeking techniques.

Although some of the content in this course lent itself to online teaching, other parts posed a great challenge and thus needed to be adjusted to fit online learning. In addition, the very nature of online learning changed over time. Considering the term “teaching online” can mean different things to different people, a clear definition of its usage is warranted here, before delving into the specific strategies instructors can employ in teaching media research methods courses or any other journalism course online. For the three above-mentioned semesters, teaching online mostly meant teaching a “live” class, synchronously, in real time, with students who engaged through a video-conferencing platform. For specific sessions, however, teaching occurred asynchronously, through recorded tutorials. The sections below highlight some lessons learned during this process.

⇒ Technology and its challenges

Among the challenges that teaching research methods online poses, the most taxing are **teaching statistics and software usage**. Although explaining research-methods material in a live videoconferencing session by sharing a computer screen is the same as explaining the same material while sharing a slide in a classroom, problems may arise with the practical component of the module. If your students don't have **licenses for SPSS** or other statistical packages on their home computers, as they might in a lab setting, you may opt to allow students to practice through your computer screen. Instead of the technologically driven option of remote access, both instructor and students can go the manual, albeit old-fashioned way. One group at a time, students can reserve a time slot of fifteen minutes to watch the screen the instructor shares and ask her to manually click here and there. Although archaic, and highly inconvenient, the method works, and students are able to **“practice” maneuvering SPSS** and later running the statistics for their research projects. If your institution does not support the SPSS software program, **JASP**, an open-source alternative made available by the University of Amsterdam at jasp-stats.org, and **PSPP** from the Free Software Foundation might be useful.

Apart from delivering the statistics module, one real challenge comes from the nature of digital technologies themselves. Bugs, glitches and weak internet connections can make maneuvering the video-conferencing platform and figuring out solutions to sudden problems quite daunting. There are times, however, when an issue might spring from the videoconferencing platform, which sometimes needs immediate updating right before a session starts. The clicks it takes to set up a PowerPoint presentation, share it with the students, record a session, and continuously move back and forth between the main screen, the chat box and the list of participants, require quick thinking and smooth transitioning. Regardless of how many times instructors do this, there are no shortcuts. The only way to lessen the negative impact is for instructors to practice the steps to get faster at them.

In addition, the poor internet infrastructure in Lebanon, coupled with the crashing economy in 2020, made it extremely difficult, if not impossible for both students and instructors to be fully engaged online. A student in a five-person household, for example, might be sharing an **internet connection and bandwidth with siblings who are also online for school** and could be sitting in the same space that had been transformed into a **makeshift classroom**. Sometimes students run out of data in their homes, so they have to switch to their cellular data on their mobile phones. In such cases, because mobile internet connections are quite expensive,

students cannot turn on their cameras during synchronous class sessions. These issues pose real challenges for students in many countries.

Internet connectivity issues and limited budgets also affect instructors. Not understanding student questions or not hearing them well due to poor connectivity takes away from the flow of a lecture. Repeating questions or explanations can use significant class time.

⇒ The power of digital tools

Although digital technologies have inherent shortcomings, they also provide benefits. Online tools can cater to active learning strategies and make the most of student engagement by **collecting on-the-spot student feedback through breakout rooms, wikis and polls**, among other tools. The value of these tools lies in their efficiency in collecting student answers with **built-in timers and word-count limits**. For instance, to gather information about what students find most difficult in the assigned readings for a particular session, an instructor in a face-to-face setting would normally ask the question and allow students to give their answers. These answers would then be written on a white board, and the instructor would visually scan them to determine which topics posed the most difficulty and needed more explanation.

While this method works, digital tools such as **Mentimeter and Kahoot!**, which let instructors build polls and quizzes that students can respond to during class, cut back on the time required to gather information in several ways. A timer built into the digital tools gives students an accurate countdown of how long they have left to submit their answers. (In face-to-face classes, both students and instructors may mostly ignore timers, resulting in more time spent on an exercise that was intended to be quick.) Additionally, these tools aggregate data for quick groupings that are more time efficient than the manual method.

If students need to sign up for a session or topic, wikis posted on the e-learning system are cleaner and more time-efficient than the usual in-person format of students circulating papers and writing their names next to sessions. Instructors using a learning management system (LMS) that does not support multiple-source collaborations through wikis that allow content editing by any participant, can use Google docs or spreadsheets (or the equivalent), sharing the link for editing. Live videoconferencing sessions can even facilitate taking attendance, since most digital systems, such as **Zoom or Webex, use digital footprints to keep track of student activities**, including accurate data of when students joined the session and how long they stayed, as opposed to manual attendance taking that might use up a few minutes of valuable class time.

⇒ Conclusion

Anyone new to online teaching might be initially shocked by the amount of preparation online teaching requires. This preparation might be even more pronounced for courses that use blended and hybrid formats, whether that is splitting the semester into part face-to-face sessions with some online components (such as including digital tools in teaching) and part asynchronous or synchronous online teaching. Putting in time and effort to plan for the first time will pay off in the end. As important is understanding the nature of the course content for an effective balance between online and offline teaching (Ammouri, n.d.). Instead of a live lecture, for instance, instructors can opt to pre-record their lectures through a PowerPoint presentation with a voiceover, for students

to watch before class. This technique frees up live class time for engagement and interaction. This strategy also stands in as a contingent plan in case internet connections fail or some other tech-related issues arise.

The old adage “necessity is the mother of invention” is useful in teaching research methods as well. Faced with the tough decision of whether to cancel part of the course content, I had to innovate. As I did, I found that some components that I traditionally taught in the classroom work best when delivered asynchronously.

Teaching how to use statistical software in research methods, for instance, is best done through short tutorials that tackle a single statistical test. Instead of the seventy-five minutes of a typical session, students can spend fifteen to twenty minutes on a tutorial and re-watch as often as they wish without interruptions from others.

Another lesson learned from three semesters of online teaching is that it is useful to switch the format of exams from close-ended questions to reflections and short answers that require critical thinking. To reduce cheating, you can design exam questions to be unique to the course and the learning that happened, and not just any research-related questions. To illustrate, students can be given a general topic, such as “children and violence” or “media representations of Middle Eastern women” and asked to design one qualitative and one quantitative study about the topic. More precise instructions can also be incorporated, such as asking for one research question and one hypothesis, a sample procedure or sample size and its rationale, and so forth. Another example would be explaining the difference between the positivist paradigm and interpretivist paradigm through a particular topic the instructor assigns, such as “media literacy in minorities,” “refugees’ media uses,” or “teenagers’ perceptions of the elderly,” among others.

The only drawback in this method is students are not tested directly on terminologies that are necessary in research. Concepts such as **internal validity, reliability, or manipulation check** are crucial for research and are generally assessed through close-ended questions. Even these straightforward concepts, however, can be tested through a critical thinking technique. For example, to test comprehension of the concept of reliability, students can be asked to explain the difference between the meaning of reliability in a survey question versus content analysis.

Takeaways

- ▶ **Always prepare, time yourself and time the exercises.**
- ▶ **Harness the power of digital tools to facilitate learning in blended or hybrid classrooms.**
- ▶ **Keep in mind the nature of the course and the nature of each module and assignment. Where in-depth explanations and student engagement are needed, a course module should be offered face-to-face, keeping other components, such as statistics training and software usage as asynchronous.**
- ▶ **Lectures can be pre-recorded as a video of a PowerPoint presentation with the instructor’s voice for students to watch alone along with assigned readings.**

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Chapter 15:

Teaching Students in Very Large Courses Online

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The teaching of online courses to large numbers of students – often far more than could fit into an actual classroom – gained widespread attention with the popularity of MOOCs around 2011 (Papano, 2013). In recent years, however, [the MOOC – or “massive open online course,”](#) usually offered as “continuing education” or leisure learning outside a degree program – has been joined in ubiquity by online classes developed within traditional degree-goaled structures, including journalism programs. The largest forms of those courses are the focus of this chapter.

MOOCs are part of a drive to bring education to many at no (or little) cost to the student through online platforms. While many massive, open classes are academically rigorous, they are not generally part of an academic degree program. [VLOCs, or “very large online classes,”](#) have a different pedagogic goal, however (Baggaley, 2013). VLOCs developed within a [system where tuition and coursework are integral parts of a degree-driven curriculum](#), and where distance learning has a long, robust history (Kentnor, 2015; Roberts, 1996).

Unlike massive-enrollment courses, which have a reputation for low completion and high drop-out rates, VLOCs aren’t intended for churn or leisure. Nor are they marketed as low-cost or free. Very

large online classes, unlike MOOCs, carry stringent requirements for a grade. The VLOC instructor is professionally invested in student success and has a considerable stake – in the form of student course evaluations, if nothing else – in the process.

In the literature, the definition of “very large” courses (sometimes “really large”) varies. For some authors, it means more than 30 to 60 students (Kofinas and Tsay, 2014); for others, more than 150 (Elison-Bowers et al., 2011) or even several hundred or more students. Research correlates or connects size to learning outcomes. A key point is that *size* is directly tied to how one handles all the components of the class, but the *intent* of the course should determine the components themselves.

The intent – or purpose – of the course bears on the type of student in the course and what that student expects. Is the course largely conceptual in nature, or is it skills driven? Both? That, in turn, affects how one teaches, the type of pedagogical materials to be employed to best effect, and the degree to which one is present, and how, in the course itself.

A skills-driven course might make frequent use of computer-graded quizzes to reinforce practice, and a concepts course might be more likely to employ a range of readings and videos introducing multiple perspectives and examples.

⇒ Time, place, presence

An instructor assigned to teach a very large online journalism course should begin by answering a series of questions related to **time, place, and presence** – which are intertwined. Where are the students taking the course? Are you all meeting at one time, or is the structure asynchronous? Or both? You might be in Any Town, Anywhere, and they might be 0.5 or 5,000 miles away. What time zone(s) are students in? In small online courses, you might be able to accommodate challenges related to times and locations in a way that allows material to be posted last-minute or allows you to require (and provide) rapid feedback. In a class with hundreds of students from widespread locales, material must be accessible over a substantive period and must be amply accessible in a variety of conditions. And, of course, the more students in the class, the greater the likelihood they come from a wider range of places. This means consideration must be given to various **digital divides – economic, geophysical and social – as well as to prevailing conditions related to climate (hurricanes, earthquakes, etc.), political restrictions (governmental censorship by country, for example), religious observances**, and any other factor that could disrupt a fair and equitable distribution of resources affecting time and access.

These constraints relate to assignments, deadlines, discussion forums, the posting of announcements, and the availability of support personnel. When making and constructing assignments and setting deadlines, instructors must:

Consider how parameters fit into various **time zones**. Giving a quiz with a four-hour completion window set up for 2 to 5 p.m. EST in the United States will force students in China to take the quiz at 3 to 6 a.m.

- Include times with time zones noted. A student in Hawaii might upload an assignment by 5 p.m. local time but still be considered late if the professor set the deadline at 5 p.m. in the U.S. Eastern Time Zone. A better approach is to set a “neutral” deadline time and routinize it, making all assignments due, for example, at 11:59 p.m. in the time zone of the university offering the course.

- Allow students enough time to do the assignment. This should almost always be more time than allowed when teaching in person. You cannot assume a common “start” time analogous to announcing the beginning of an assignment in an in-person class.
- Explain the assignment in detail; **include a rubric**. Consider making a video in which you explain (or demonstrate, if applicable) what is to be done. Consider posting examples of exemplary projects from previous sections of the course.
- **Announce deadlines well in advance** after checking them against knowable conflicts (such as holidays). Keep grading in mind. Will you and/or your graders need to work during time that is normally or reasonably off limits because you haven’t budgeted appropriate time to grade? If there is leeway in setting due dates of projects or exams, err on the side of early to minimize stress and inconvenience for all, including you and your colleagues.

⇒ A pervasive impact

The impact that a very large online class has on an instructor’s time was noted early in the history of VLOCs (Elison-Bowers, 2011), and it’s tied to the amplification of things the teacher needs to address because of the platform. **The need for technological and pedagogical backup – tech support and teaching assistants – is key.** If there are many students, there will be many issues and tasks, and they will be far too many for one person to handle. The reason for this is both obvious – more people, more things go wrong (or at least veer that way) – and subtle. The more people with whom you’re involved, the more backgrounds, cultures, family issues, health issues, levels of education and understanding, and on and on.

As for presence, the instructor – as presented to the students– sets the tone for an online course whether synchronous or asynchronous. When creating [the online persona](#), be attentive to its effect. Will this be a nurturing experience, or one in which the information is presented, and it’s sink or swim for the student? Will students be encouraged to participate, to think of themselves as part of a community, or is everyone an island? Much of this comes from the teacher’s style and is revealed through notes to students, video lectures, and the instructor’s approach to assignments. It makes sense that a strong and welcoming presence is conducive to people wanting to interact with that presence and, hence, the course.

To build that presence, begin the course with a video introduction to what students will study and learn during the term. Create tutorials for each module or unit; if you’re shy, use **an illustration – a “cartoon” representation of yourself** – easily created with social media tools. **Record an audio message or send notes, and use a welcoming tone when explaining assignments.** One way to do this is to start your explanations with the basics and build step by step so nobody feels “less” in experience or understanding, than others. Respond to questions in a timely manner, even if it’s to refer the student to university tech support. But also set boundaries. If you do not regularly check email after 5 p.m. or are unavailable for much of a certain day because of other commitments, tell students that. [Sharing your boundaries](#) communicates that you respect your own time as much as the students’.

The platform and course structure also communicate presence, especially in an asynchronous course, where most interaction with the teacher, any teaching assistants, and all the course materials is mediated through the learning management system (LMS). Familiarize yourself with the LMS, because its affordances have a direct bearing on the way the course is taught and the types of assignments that can be given. Is there a format that allows students to easily communicate with the instructor and teaching assistants? Is there a **“help” option**

that allows quick and reliable technical support? Is that assistance open to students? What is the default setting for the gradebook? Do students automatically see their grades as soon as they're entered, or can they be held until all can be released at once?

The “shell” in which the course exists may arrive essentially blank or as a course previously taught by you or someone else. Each practice has challenges. Just because a shell's organizational format has been used before is no guarantee of its efficacy, but the time for an overhaul is between terms, not during them. In a large asynchronous course, front-loading the course with its content should be a high priority so that you can respond to students' questions and promptly grade work while the course runs.

Consider ways to make a huge course feel more intimate for students. If you are using learning management system discussion forums to replicate some features of in-person classroom discussions, consider dividing the class into multiple discussion groups so that students discuss with and get to know a smaller number of classmates. The advantage of large classes, however, is what one gains in diversity, so try to strike a balance that works in the context of your course.

The organizational structure determines the pace of the class and frames how material is received. Is there a logical order? Will content be given in chunks (modules) organized by topic, time, or both? There are two basic approaches:

- **Topical units:** Interviewing, fact-checking, understanding municipal budgets
- **Chronological:** Week 1: Interviewing, Week 2: Fact-checking

A topical approach lends itself to a flexible timetable, allowing for some topics to take more time than others, whereas a time-based approach integrates a plannable pace. Combining the two approaches fits well into VLOC goals. That way, skills learned can be revisited or carried along into skills being taught, a realistic approximation of how skills are used outside of class. Most learning management systems allow the instructor to set prerequisites for viewing or interacting – in other words, require completion of one endeavor (a quiz, an assignment, etc.) – before access is offered to another.



Conclusion

In March 2020, many thousands of in-person college and university classes worldwide switched, sometimes overnight, to remote instruction. The unexpected upheaval disrupted momentum, tone, and practice, and was potentially overwhelming, even for those with experience teaching online. Classes within a planned online learning environment are “meaningfully different,” as Hodges et al. (2020) put it, from those taught remotely due to crisis. With increased attention and growing corporate interest in sponsoring online education as an employee benefit (Perez-Pena, 2014; Woodward, 2021), there's a reasonable expectation that large online classes will be an increasingly common experience. Despite mixed opinions about the future of online teaching (Lederman, 2019), the influx of educators and students into the online arena during the COVID pandemic demonstrated the efficacy and advantages of that mode as an option during crisis, and as a potential new norm that could increase flexibility and reach while providing a platform for innovation and the development of new teaching skills.

Those who came to online teaching through emergency migration found themselves faced with new ways of approaching place and time. Physical gatherings were replaced by chats and transmissions on Canvas, Blackboard, Zoom or another platform, digital approximations of togetherness. The pandemic scattered students

and faculty, often to places far from the academic institution to which they were bound. This necessitated recognition of time as a relative construct with regard to physical presence. One student's afternoon might be another's morning; professorial control of the classroom experience became monumentally different. Concepts such as these have always mattered in terms of structuring classes and fostering community, but for online classes, they must be rethought.

With the digital doors open to global enrollment and a multitude of educational levels, backgrounds, and cultures, making the material both focused and broadly relevant requires sensitivity and skill. The most important factor might be being aware that **focus and relevance** is needed and therefore striving to make it happen.



Takeaways

- ▶ **In a large online course, especially one taught asynchronously, the organizational structure determines the pace of the class and frames how material is received. Is there a logical order? Will content be given in chunks (modules) organized by topic, time, or both?**
- ▶ **The size of the class is directly tied to how one handles all the components of the class, but the intent of the class determines the components themselves.**
- ▶ **Instructors must determine whether a course will be a nurturing experience, where students are encouraged to think of themselves as part of a participatory community – though a very large one – or a sink-or-swim experience where everyone is an island?**

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Part IV:

The future of online journalism education



Chapter 16:

Skeptics no more: A new era for journalism education delivery

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In an essay published during the COVID-19 pandemic, U.S. journalism scholar Seth Lewis (2020) suggested that a time that disrupted the work of many journalism researchers also offered them a chance to reflect on what they study and how.

"Even if 'normal' eventually returns to much of our everyday lives and scholarly routines," he wrote, "we should not pass up this opportunity to ponder questions about our role and impact in the world—questions that may look different in light of the pandemic and the premium it places on the relevance and relatability of our work" (p. 685).

His call for reflection is apt, too, I would argue, for journalism instructors.

As we move further from a time in early 2020 when a virus forced educators to move first to emergency remote course delivery and then, in some cases, to months of planned online

instruction (Brunner and Mutsvairo, 2021), there is much to think about related to where we have been, where we are and, where we might go in teaching journalism online.

⇒ The past

First, we should consider where journalism education stood pre-pandemic. Although it is impossible to generalize the state of university-level journalism education in diverse areas around the world, it is probably fair to say that in at least some regions, journalism education had approached online teaching in much the same way that **newspapers initially approached the internet: as a non-urgent opportunity** (Obijiofor and Green, 2001) or **potential disruptive threat** (Saksena and Hollifield, 2002; Stahl, 2004).

Before the pandemic, some educators across disciplines expressed resistance to or skepticism about online teaching, citing concerns that ranged from inadequate technological support and training to concern for what student learning outcomes might be (Hunt et al., 2014; Mansbach and Austin, 2018). In other places, as Kozman (2023) and Musah (2023) point out in this handbook, possibilities for online journalism education were hampered by a lack of widely available and affordable internet access.

⇒ The present

Next, we should examine where journalism education is now. Around the world, journalism programs possess several attributes most did not have in 2019:

- **A huge cadre of veteran online instructors:** Never has teaching around the world been so simultaneously transformed as it was in 2020 and, in some locations, in 2021 and 2022. The number of **instructors who have actual experience teaching digitally – in fully online (synchronous or asynchronous) forms, or in blended online/offline fashion – is now far larger** than one might have expected, pre-pandemic, that it ever would be. In propelling many, if not most, journalism instructors and programs into remote/online course-delivery mode for at least part of a term, the coronavirus did what two decades of technological innovation had not. Some of these teachers, of course, had poor experiences and may prefer to never teach online again. But others will have added to their teaching toolbox a course delivery method or methods that they enjoy or that fits their lifestyle (Badr and Elmaghraby, 2021).
- **Realization that widespread online instruction is possible:** During the pandemic, journalism programs of all types – from the largest and most cosmopolitan to those serving mostly students living on campus or near the university – transitioned to some form of distance learning. Some programs – including those whose “brand” is based on face-to-face, highly interactive instruction in small classes – may never want to go back to large-scale online course delivery. Nevertheless, those programs now know that if they have to move online – because of a new COVID variant, a new pandemic, wildfires, floods, social unrest or other unforeseen events – they have the experience to do so.
- **Practice being nimble:** At many universities, the uncertainties of early 2020 (as COVID initially spread) and 2022 (as the more-infectious Omicron variant forced some universities back online, at least temporarily) resulted in administrators and instructors having to change directions rapidly more than once. For an institution such as academia, which is known for its process orientation and deliberate pace (Murray, 2008), **practice making quick changes is valuable.**

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- **Instructors who may be deeply tired:** Many journalism instructors taught from home during the pandemic, working in spaces occupied by others, while care-giving. Others were alone and isolated, seeing few faces beyond those in the boxes on their laptop screens. Some instructors taught, using unfamiliar learning management systems, while sick themselves. Others watched time they would have devoted to research they needed to complete to advance in their careers dissolve as they prepped classes for new delivery formats or took care of others. The result could be **emotional exhaustion from the effects of doing emotional labor** (Auger and Formentin, 2021).
- **Students who have missed out on some opportunities but may have developed valuable skills in the process:** Some journalism students have been **unable to do in-person internships, work on student media in face-to-face newsroom settings**, take part in field trips or study outside their own countries. They may have, however, have developed **new resiliency and self-efficacy** in the process (Lance & Reynolds, 2021).



The future

Leveraging online expertise

What do these current realities mean for the future? First, they suggest that journalism programs may be better poised than they have been for some time to leverage the possibilities of **online course delivery that make sense for them**.

It's unlikely, of course, that many, if any, journalism programs will want to convert all their courses to online delivery. Even in a digital age, most students attend university, in part, to learn in in-person settings. In addition, journalism programs that are struggling to attract students (Term Enrollment Estimates, 2021) should beware of thinking that successfully engaging online with already-enrolled students during a pandemic means that the program suddenly will be able to use online course delivery to recruit and retain students from outside the geographical areas they usually draw from. The proportion of students who choose journalism as a focus of their study and want to study primarily online is probably fairly low.

There may, however, be specific courses – including required gateway courses that teach easily codified material, such as grammar – that can be offered more consistently and effectively in an asynchronous online setting (Poniatowski, 2012). Programs with multiple sections of some courses might also want to offer some in person and others online to allow students with different life situations or learning preferences to choose what works best for them.

In addition, instructors might want to leverage the flexibility of synchronous online settings to bring students closer to professionals in their own country or abroad. For example, as Thomson and Sternberg (2023) note in this volume, it's easier in most cases for individual professionals to join classes via videoconference than to travel to campus. But it might also be useful for the instructor in an online asynchronous course to “take” students on **a virtual visit to a newsroom**, letting them meet multiple professionals without leaving home.

Journalism programs should also assess, over the next two years or so, the effect of secondary online education on new students coming into journalism programs. These students may be accustomed to online education, for at least some courses, and welcome the chance to time-shift learning in asynchronous courses or learn from home in synchronous online courses. Or they may have had their fill of the teacher as a videoconference square!

Online courses also offer the opportunity to address diversity and difference by allowing students – and instructors – to **overcome distance and collaborate with students in journalism programs on the other side of the city, country or world**. Such collaborations would require planning and, in synchronous courses, alignment of course times. They would, perhaps, be easier in asynchronous courses, where groups of students might make and send each other videos about, for example, the understanding of news values or regulation of journalism in their culture.

One lesson that journalism programs must take away from the COVID era concerns **digital divides and disability**. If journalism schools and departments make longstanding use of online platforms, they must incorporate into their teaching and curricula understanding of how digital design choices can make information accessible or inaccessible to some people, based on physical disabilities or differences in access to technology.

Training for emergency transitions

Journalism programs might also consider **codifying** – while pandemic memories are fresh – what worked in the transition to emergency teaching so that the advice is available for future emergencies. Some authors have suggested that training of primary and secondary school teachers should include information on transitioning instruction online during emergencies (Trust and Whalen, 2020). **Training in transitioning effectively from face-to-face to online teaching** might help university instructors move nimbly and preserve instructional time when short-term situations, such as adverse weather, make it difficult to hold classes in person.

Time to regroup for instructors and graduates

Journalism programs should also acknowledge that the futures of instructors and students likely were affected by the pandemic in ways that may not yet be fully visible. Programs should take into account the burdens faced by instructors, especially those who converted high numbers of courses to online delivery quickly and sustained heavy teaching loads in the face of health or other personal pandemic-related issues.

Faculty members who are expected to publish scholarly or journalistic work as part of their jobs may not have been able to meet publication goals. Instructors who held responsibility for developing new instructional programs may have been stymied in finishing that work.

In all such cases, journalism programs should note the **potential trauma** of the pandemic period and offer not just more time to meet goals, if needed, but also consideration that time, alone, is not the entire answer. For example, some North American universities, which have tenure systems that require faculty members to meet requirements for promotion within a certain time period or lose their positions, have offered all faculty on what is known as the “tenure track” a chance to pause the assessment clock. As multiple authors (e.g., Greenfield, 2021; Khamis-Dakwar and Hiller, 2020) have argued, however, those efforts can actually disadvantage the scholars affected – many of whom may be women or members of marginalized groups – by making them work longer to attain positions in which they are underrepresented, because of a global emergency they could not control. Instead, Khamis-Dakwar and Hiller suggest, “given the unprecedented context, colleges and universities should invest in a more complete mapping of **how the pandemic directly impacts women faculty and faculty of color** in order to offer alternative models for review that are fair and comprehensive.”

Journalism programs should also consider the effect of the pandemic and online instruction on students who completed most of their degrees or graduated during the COVID era. Some may have missed out on special social moments, such as in-person honors celebrations or graduation ceremonies that were moved online or canceled. Programs should offer those students a chance to participate in in-person ceremonies in the future,

even if that future is several years away. Having an accomplished graduate who missed an in-person ceremony in 2020 take part in 2025 might be inspiring for current students and graduates.

Other students may have, more important, missed key instruction that was impossible or difficult to deliver online. For example, students in a broadcast journalism course may not have had the chance to work closely with **professional-grade cameras, lights or microphones in a broadcast studio or use professional-grade video-editing programs while learning from home**. Journalism programs could invite graduates who missed out on some level of instruction to the university for a day or afternoon of instruction with current students.



Conclusion

In an unprecedented period for journalism education, university programs around the world have, out of necessity, developed experience with and, in some cases, expertise in online teaching. Although most programs may still value face-to-face instruction as the primary mode, the fact that a large number of journalism instructors now have online teaching experience means that their programs can be **more nimble in face of future emergencies**. Journalism programs should also be aware, however, of the **potential effects of the pandemic on the careers of instructors and graduates who studied during the COVID era** and look for creative ways to address them.

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Susan Keith (Ph.D., University of North Carolina-Chapel Hill) is an associate professor and former chair (2016-2020) of the Department of Journalism and Media Studies in the School of Communication and Information at Rutgers University. She has experience in online courses as both a learner and a teacher. She took a fully online course in her master's program at the University of South Florida in 1998. She has been teaching online courses at the undergraduate level since 2004, when she taught Global News online for Rutgers from Paris. She has also taught online at the graduate level since 2011.

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Ingrid Bachmann (Ph.D., University of Texas at Austin) is an associate professor in the School of Communications at Pontificia Universidad Católica de Chile, where she chaired the Journalism Department between 2016 and 2020. In this role, she supervised the transition to remote and online teaching of over 100 courses for the entire 2020 academic year in the context of the COVID-19 pandemic. In addition to administration, she also has experience in online courses as a student and as an instructor.

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Kelly Fincham (Ph.D., Dublin City University) is program director for the Global Media MA and journalism lecturer in the BA and MA programs in the Discipline of Journalism at University of Galway. Before joining NUIG in Spring 2021 she was an associate lecturer at Hofstra University in the US. She has designed and delivered online classes for an international audience at both Hofstra and NUIG and has converted several reporting courses to an online or hybrid platform. She teaches at both undergraduate and graduate level.

Kim Fox (M.A., Ohio University) is a professor of practice in the Department of Journalism and Mass Communication at The American University in Cairo. Her knowledge base is rooted in teaching, research and production. In fact, she has extensive experience in radio and audio media including as the executive producer of the award-winning Ehky Ya Masr (Tell Your Story Egypt) Podcast. Her tech savvy attributes gave her the foresight to have her students upload their audio projects online starting in 2009.

Constanza García Gentil, BA, is a research assistant on communication currently working with Manuel Alejandro Guerrero Ph.D. She is also an Op-Ed columnist for the newspaper El Sol de México. She studies public opinion, political communication and political psychology. Her research examines the effects of polarization in communication and democracy, and how it relates to political attitudes and media narratives. She previously worked as the Communication and Media manager at the Mexican Council of Foreign Relations (COMEXI). She has also worked as a research assistant in communication, misinformation and media literacy. She holds a Bachelor's degree in Communication with a minor in Journalism from the Universidad Iberoamericana in Mexico City.

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Claudia Kozman (Ph.D., Indiana University) is an assistant professor in residence in the Journalism and Strategic Communication Program at Northwestern University in Qatar. She previously was an assistant professor of multimedia journalism and the director of research at the Institute of Media and Training (IMRT) at the Lebanese American University in Lebanon. She teaches courses in research methods, media theory, and media systems, which complement her focus on the importance of incorporating scientific research and inquiry in pedagogy. In her teaching, she relies on active learning and critical thinking strategies to engage her students with the course, regardless of course content and in both online and in-person classroom formats.

Julian Rodriguez (M.A., University of Texas at Arlington) is a broadcast journalism specialist at the University of Texas at Arlington (UTA). He teaches television news with an emphasis on Hispanic-American media, and researches Hispanic media in the United States and the adoption of new and emerging media technologies to develop and nurture awareness systems. He is also the Director of the UTA Hispanic Media Initiative (HMI), a program focusing on the advancement of Hispanic media education, journalism, and research.

Jason Sternberg (Ph.D., University of Queensland) is a senior lecturer in the School of Communication at the Queensland University of Technology. He has been teaching since 1998 and is at the forefront of Australian journalism educators and thought leaders. In 2007, the *Melbourne Age* named Jason as belonging to a new generation of public intellectuals “who have emerged over the past decade with a determination to help set

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Zakaria Tanko Musah offers a unique perspective; a Barrister-at-law, England and Wales, and Ghana, Solicitor of the Supreme Court of Ghana, Journalist and a media commentator on media ethics and law, journalism, and political communication and an Academic. He is a lecturer at the Ghana Institute of Journalism and a former Head of Print Journalism Department/ Internship Coordinator and Legal Counsel of the school. Mr. Musah has experience in online learning as a student and a teacher. He has been involved in the introduction or adoption of hybrid learning experience in the Ghanaian tertiary education landscape.

T. J. Thomson (Ph.D., University of Missouri) is a senior lecturer in the School of Communication at the Queensland University of Technology. He has been teaching since 2014 and was recognized in 2021 by the Association for Education in Journalism and Mass Communication with its Visual Communication Teacher of the Year Award. T. J. recently published *To See and Be Seen* (winner of the NCA’s 2020 Diane S. Hope Book of the Year Award) and is the 2019 Anne Dunn Scholar of the Year (jointly bestowed by the Journalism Education and Research Association of Australia and the Australia and New Zealand Communication Association).

Leslie-Jean Thornton (Ph.D., University of North Carolina-Chapel Hill) is an associate professor at Arizona State University’s Walter Cronkite School of Journalism & Mass Communication. Formerly a journalist, her research focuses on the evolution of information-sharing practices through digital technology, emphasizing social and visual aspects. She has taught small, moderate, and very large classes online in both synchronous and asynchronous environments at both undergraduate and graduate levels. She has been an avid enrollee (and completer) of MOOC offerings, from many universities, for many years. She designed and taught her first online-related (but in-person) course, Internet Effects, in 2001 at SUNY New Paltz.

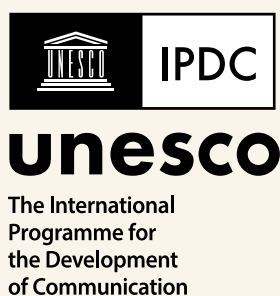
Karen M. Turner (JD, Northwestern University) is an associate professor, a former Journalism department chair, past president of the Faculty Senate and director of Temple’s Academic Center on Research in Diversity (ACCORD). A 2021 recipient of the Great Teacher award, Temple’s highest teaching recognition, she has taught her course *Race and Racism in the News* online since 1997. She has experienced and adapted to the changing technological landscape which has made the process of online teaching less daunting. And she has engaged online with the evolving student population of learners from GenXers to today’s GenZ digital natives.

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Ruhan Zhao (Ph.D., Communication University of China) is a Professor, Vice-Dean of Faculty of International Media (2019-2022), Vice-chair of Journalism Research and Education, IAMCR (2021-2025), Fellow of Higher Education Academy. She earned Ph.D. from Université Libre de Bruxelles and Communication University of China. Her work spans the fields of internet-native journalism, the sociology of news, and communication theories. She has been teaching online courses at both undergraduate and graduate level since 2019.

This manual offers journalism instructors key resources to improve their teaching in digital spaces. It draws from lessons during the pandemic, compiled by almost 20 practitioners. Their enduring insights support the historical trend towards using technology to expand opportunities for teaching and learning journalism.

As part of its journalism education series covering a range of topical publications of value to journalism teachers all over the globe, UNESCO's International Programme for the Development of Communication (IPDC) has supported the World Journalism Education Council in commissioning this handbook.



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